

K. Haywood

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THE  
FRUITLESS ENQUIRY.

BEING  
A COLLECTION

Of several entertaining  
HISTORIES AND OCCURRENCES,

Which fell under the OBSERVATION of  
A LADY in her Search after HAPPINESS.

By the AUTHOR of the HISTORY of  
Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

THE SECOND EDITION.



LONDON:

Printed for T. Lowndes, in Fleet-Street.

MDCCLXVII.



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T. Lowndes, Francis Noble, John Noble, William Baskin, T. Vernor and J. Chater, Thomas Jones, William Cooke,



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
Lady ELIZ. JERMAIN.

**A**S it is not in the power of great titles, personal perfections, nor the goods of fortune, but in that innate peace of mind, which arises from virtue, and a superior excellence of nature, to bestow true happiness; to whom should the *enquirer* after it have recourse, but to your ladyship, whose eternal harmony of soul, and ever chearing goodness to all who come within the reach of it, are an evident demonstration, that noble birth, beauty, and even wit, (all dazzling qualifications as they are) are yet the smallest of your charms, and, I dare believe, afford least pleasure to yourself?

#### iv DEDICATION.

It is, madam, from that unbounded sweetness of disposition, in which your ladyship is so eminently distinguished, that I alone can hope a pardon for this presumption. I have little to say in defence of the following sheets, or of myself, more than that they contain the history of some real facts; and as my chief design in publishing them, being to persuade my sex from seeking happiness the wrong way, the most certain means to acquire success in that endeavour, is to inscribe it to a lady, whose example, in every stage of life, is of more lively force to reform the manners, and refine the mind, than the most learned and elaborate precepts of the best writers.

How is it possible to consider your ladyship's character in your virgin, your married, or your widowed state, and not wish, at least, to emulate so glorious a pattern! With what indignant shame must the prude, the coquet, the vain-glorious boaster of imaginary conquests; the proud, the over-curious, and the splenetick part of womankind be struck, when

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when they reflect, that she alone, who is most worthy of applause, is least ambitious of it, and who rather wishes her merits less distinguishable, by having many equals in them, than to shine in an unrivalled lustre the *phœnix* of the admiring world.

May heaven permit your ladyship long life, and an uninterrupted series of health and happiness, which shall ever be the sincere and ardent prayers of,

M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's

Most devoted,

Most faithful, and

Most humble servant,

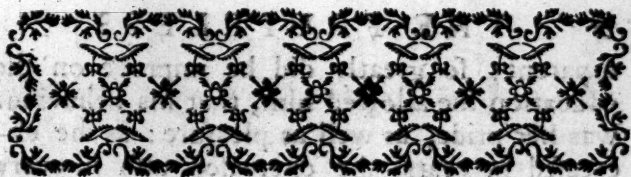
E. HAYWOOD.





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## THE

### FRUITLESS ENQUIRY.

**A** Certain nobleman of Venice, dying in the prime of his years, left behind him a widow called Miramillia, justly esteemed one of the most lovely women of the age, and a little son not exceeding six years old; so dear to his mother, that though her beauty, wealth, and accomplishments, attracted the love and admiration of almost as many as beheld her, and the noblest youth in the republick desired her in marriage; yet did she decline all the advantages offered her for this darling of her soul, and resolved to continue the remainder of her days in a single state, fearing, that in bestowing herself, she should also be obliged to relinquish the power she had of managing the estate for him, to one who would less consult his interest. Never was mother more anxious for the welfare of a child, nor never did any child seem more to deserve the affections of

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a parent; so greatly did he improve on the education she allowed him, that his behaviour was her pride, as well as pleasure: as he encreased in years, he encreased also in every manly grace; there was no art, no science, no exercise, befitting his quality, of which he was not a perfect master, and in many of them he excelled those whose profession it was to instruct.

Till he arrived at the age of twenty, did his happy mother glory in maternal fondness; and was so far from believing she ever should have reason to do otherwise, that she scarce knew how to pity the misfortunes of those who lamented the undutifulness, or ill management of their children: but alas! on how weak a foundation do all human joys depend, and how little ought we to triumph in the transient blessings of fate, which in a moment may vanish, and in their room as poignant ills arise. In the height of her satisfaction, just when she had seen the promising bloom of this young man arrive at maturity, and every wish was to its height completed, then all at once did misery fall on her, and she became more wretched than ever she had been blest.

Early one morning did this beloved son go out, as was frequently his custom, to indulge meditation in a fine wilderness adjacent to the castle; but night not bringing him home, nor the ensuing day, nor many others affording any tidings of him, the fears and perplexities

plexities of a mother so tenderly fond as was his, are not to be conceived. Through every part of the city she sent in search of him, but all her messengers returned without success; he could not be heard of, nor could any person be found that had seen him: days, weeks, and months past on in this manner, and quite raving with her griefs, she fell into a sort of superstitious credulity, which before she had despised; it was that of applying to fortune-tellers, and a vain expectation of knowing that from man, which heaven permits not the discovery of, even to the angels themselves. But her good sense not suffering her to place any great dependance on what they said, she no sooner heard the predictions of one, than she went to another, comparing them together, believing that if they agreed, they might be worthy of belief; but being different, one telling her he would speedily return, another that he was dead, a third that he was married to a woman unworthy of him; but a fourth, wiser than the rest, would not pretend to give her any direct account, but only told her, that to engage his return, she should procure a shirt made for him by the hands of a person so completely contented in mind, that there was no wish but that she enjoyed. “If you can prevail on such a woman to undertake this little piece of work, said he, before it be finished, you will infallibly hear news of your son; but you must be certain, continued he, that the person you employ be perfectly

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“scilly



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“fectly at ease; if the least anxious thought, the most minute perplexity, discontent, or care, ruffles her mind, or ever throws a heaviness upon her spirits, the work will be of no effect.” Tho’ this afflicted mother had too much good sense to imagine such a thing could be of any consequence to the obtaining her desires, yet the enchantment being of so innocent a nature, she resolved to make the experiment; and to that end, set herself to think which of her acquaintance was the most qualified for this important piece of sempstry. One she knew had vast possessions, all the grandeur which the world idolizes, beauty, wit, health, and a sweetness of disposition, which rendered her capable of enjoying those blessings; but then she was married to a man of so perverse a nature, that it took up her whole study to please him, and the little success she had in that endeavour, frequently gave her many bitter perturbations. Another, in all appearance, was possesst of every thing that can be wished, a wealthy and good husband, many fine children, and the general esteem and good character of the world, but she had made this lady the confident of her passion for a young gentleman, and in that criminal inclination were all the pleasures of her life overwhelmed and lost. One had an undutiful son, another an unfortunate daughter, a third an extravagant husband, a fourth an unloving one, a fifth was distracted with a step-dame’s overlooking eye, a sixth had

had married a man, whose children by a former venture were an eternal plague upon her spirits; one had so much ready cash, that she was always in care how to bestow it with the least hazard, and most advantage; another was perplex'd for want of it, and the exigencies to which persons in that misfortune are reduced. Few there were to whom she could apply with any hope of success, if it were really truth that the predictor had endeavoured to make her believe: but among the number of those was a lady whose name was Anziana; she was married to one of the chief of the nobility, a man scarce to be equaled for his personal charms, or the improvements of education, and one who both before, and after his marriage, had given a thousand testimonies of the most tender regard for her: never did any pair appear to live together in a more perfect harmony; three fine sons and two beautiful daughters were the product of their loves, all lovely, all hopeful, and promising a future age of happiness to their glad parents. Where could contentment dwell, if not in such a family? who can be compleatly blest, if Anziana was not? To her therefore it was that she resolved to have recourse, and doubted not but to receive from her friendship, that favour which she imagined was in her power to grant.

In pursuance of this design, she again set herself at her long neglected toilet, and resumed those ornaments which till now she had

not worn since the loss of her dear son; and when drest with all her former exactness, went to the house of Anxiana, where she was received by that lady with all the demonstrations imaginable of a sincere friendship; but when she related to her the errand on which she came, she looked extremely surprized, and would fain have persuaded her from giving any adherence to advice which seemed so perfectly chimerical; but the other continuing to insist on it, and appearing somewhat resentful that she should refuse so small a trouble, when it would do her so great a piece of service; at last she consented to make the trial, on condition she would remain in her house for the space of eight days: at the end of which time, said she, if you perceive nothing which may render me incapable of serving you in the way you mention, I shall willingly undertake it. The sorrowful mother could not but comply with so reasonable a request, and in doing so, found every thing agreeable to that character of perfect tranquillity, to which the prognosticator had directed her; she now no longer doubted but she should be able to make the experiment, if there were any dependance to be placed in the words of these soothsayers. Never had she beheld a family better managed; every thing was done with that ease, that regularity, and concord, that business were a pleasure: the servants seemed to obey more through love than fear, the mistress had not the trouble of commanding; so ready were they

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they to observe her very looks and motions, that what she would have done, was so before her desire could form itself into words: the children observed the same decorum; but these were petty felicities compared with that which flowed from a conjugal affection, so tender, so obliging, so ardent, and unchangeable, as that appeared to be between Anziana and her husband Count Caprera: never were endearments carried to a higher pitch, nor had more the look of sincerity. In fine, all that can be conceived of felicity was theirs, and was thought an exception to that general rule, that perfect happiness is not to be found on earth.

The time prefixed by Anziana being elapsed, her distressed visitor entreated the performance of her promise; to which the other in a melancholy accent thus replied. “ Alas! said she, how liable are we to be deceived by appearances! How little does the outward show demonstrate, sometimes, the real disposition of the heart! I, who seem the most fortunate of my sex, am indeed the most wretched; nor is it in the power of fate to load me with superior ills.” But to ease the amazement in which my words have involved you, follow me, and you shall be informed in full of the whole dismal cause. As she spoke this, she turned hastily towards the door of the chamber, and the other going after her as she had desired, they passed through several rooms, till they came to a long gallery,



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at the end of which was a closet. There Anziana stopped, and taking a key out of her pocket, opened it, and went in, desiring the other to do the same: but with what horror and affright was her soul invaded, when, as soon as she entered, the first object that presented itself to her, was the skeleton of a man, with arms extended wide, as if in act to seize the adventurous gazer, and on the breast was fixed a label; which, as soon as she was enough recovered from that terror which so unexpected and so shocking a sight had plunged her in, to be able to look upon it, Anziana took her by the hand, and bringing her nearer, showed it her, containing these words, which to make them yet more dreadful, were writ in blood.

“Remember, Anziana, it is for your crime  
“that I am thus, and let a just contrition  
“take up your ensuing days, and peace be  
“ever a stranger to your soul, till you be-  
“come as I am.”

Let the reader imagine himself in this lady's place, and he will then be able to conceive some part of that astonishment she was in at beholding an object of this dire nature, in a house where nothing but mirth and cheerfulness appeared to reign: to describe it, is not in the power of language; therefore, I shall only say, that it took from her the power of speech, and tho' she passionately longed for the explanation of so strange an adventure, yet her tongue refused to obey the dictates of her  
her

her heart, and by the wild confusion of her looks, and eyes half starting from their spheres, alone it was, that she could make known her wonder, or her curiosity: but Anziana perfectly understanding what it was she desired, made her turn from that ungrateful object, and sit down by her on a couch some distance from it, where she began thus. Had I not been convinced of your discretion, said she, I should not have taken this method to show how improper a person I am to undertake the task you came hither to employ me in: I will therefore exact no promises from you of preserving my secret, nor desire any other security for it than your own honour; but as I have begun with bringing you into this closet, which, since thus furnished, has never been entered by any but myself, I will proceed to reveal by what strange means this dreadful guest was harboured here; but because I cannot do it clearly, without going back to some passages of the former part of my life, you must excuse the length of my narration, which will at least be of this service to you, that your own woes will sit more lightly on you, when you shall know how infinitely more heavy those are, under which I labour. These words drew a flood of tears from her to whom they were addressed, as thinking it impossible for any misfortune to exceed that which she sustained; but composing herself as well as she could, she prepared to give atten-

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tion to what the other was about to say, who immediately began the relation she had promised in these terms.

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*The HISTORY of ANZIANA, Signior  
LORÈNZO, and Count CAPRERA.*

**I**T is not unknown to you, said she, that I am descended from one of the best families in this republick, and that I had a fortune equal to my birth; I shall therefore pass over in silence the years of my childhood, nothing happening to me worthy of remark, till my fourteenth year: at which time, many there were who solicited me for marriage, among the number of whom was Signior Lorenzo, a young gentleman whole equal yet I never saw, nor can believe the whole world can produce: at first the deference I paid him, I thought only was owing to his merit, and that all who knew him, treated him with the same. But alas! too soon I found my admiration proceeded from a softer motive, and that it was love that made me so quick-sighted to his perfections, and had sense enough to distinguish, that tho' he was infinitely deserving, I saw all his graces through a magnifying glass, and adored what others but approved: the infancy of love, however, affords too much pleasure to a youthful heart for the efforts of reason to be able to repel it.

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I suffered the sweet enchantment to grow upon me, till it overwhelmed and sunk all other considerations; and never reflecting on the difficulties which might arise to separate us, indulged the dear delight his society afforded; and while I listened to his vows, knew neither fear nor grief: yet had I been capable of thought, how easy had it been to me, to have foreseen my father would not look on Lorenzo with my eyes, and that all his accomplishments would not have been sufficient to make up for the disparity of his birth and fortune. All at once, therefore, did my misfortune come upon me, and when I was arrived at the utmost extreme of passion, did I receive a command to check it, from his mouth, whence there was no appeal: in fine, just as Lorenzo had obtained my permission to demand me of my father, did he order me to see him no more, and severely reprimanded me for having given any encouragement to his addresses. I durst not but promise to obey, tho' heaven knows how little my heart was capable of making good my words: now did I begin to find there were bitters enough in love to empoison all the sweets of it; but the disease had spread too far to hope a cure, nor indeed did I endeavour at it. I apprized Lorenzo by letter of what had happened, and appointed to meet him the next day at the house of a person whom I made the confident of this affair. He failed not to come, and instead of fulfilling the dictates of my



duty in taking an eternal leave of him, I suffered myself to be swayed wholly by those of my love, and entered into the most solemn obligation that vows could form, never to be but his: that ceremony, which is called marriage, is infinitely less binding, than the repeated oaths I kneeling made, and the curses I imprecated on myself, if ever I swerved from them: death itself was not to dissolve the contract, but the survivor swore to pay the same regard to the memory of the deceased, as when living, and in a condition to know, and to return those proofs of fidelity. Not long after this, my father unhappily incurred the displeasure of the senate to so high a degree, that he stood in need of all the interest he had, to preserve his estate from being forfeited, and himself sent into banishment: of all the friends that appeared for him, Count Caprera was the most serviceable; and indeed it was wholly owing to his great power, and steady adherence to the cause he had espoused, that my father was acquitted. So important a service required the most grateful retributions, nor was my father deficient in paying them; he offered him the half of that estate he had preserved, but he would accept no other recompence than Anziana: he declared himself possessor of the most violent passion for me, and that he had been prevented from discovering it, but by the apprehensions of his unworthiness, till the lucky opportunity offered, of conferring an obligation on my family, which,

as he said, might give some pretence to hope, he should not be refused. Had my father never experienced his friendship, it is highly improbable there would have been any occasion for such a fear; the Count, I must acknowledge, notwithstanding the little effect his charms have been able to work on me, being posselt of every advantage that can make marriage pleasing. But there is an awe which accompanies true affection, and indeed is often fatal to it. It was so at least to that the Count had for me, since had he sooner made an offering of his heart, perhaps I never should have disposed of mine to Lorenzo. Then might we have all been happy, nor would this dreadful spectacle have distracted my sight, which brings the fatal *past*, for ever *present* to my tormented mind: but such was the decree of all-disposing heaven, nor must I dare to murmur. With these words, the swelling tears, in spite of her efforts to the contrary, burst their passage through her eyes, and she was some time before she could recover herself to prosecute her story; but when she did, it was in this manner.

My father, resumed she, was perfectly transported at this offer of the Count's, and without consulting my inclination in the affair, readily promised I should be his wife, and that the marriage should be solemnized in a few days. How terrible a surprize, therefore, was it to me, when sitting one day in my chamber alone, contemplating on the perfections of my dear Lorenzo, my father enter-

ed, and informed me what I have been just now relating; I knew him positive in all his resolutions, and he expressed this on the account of the obligations he had to the Count, and the honour our family would receive in an alliance with him, with an unusual warmth, and arbitrary air: I durst not utter the least syllable in opposition to what he said, but he saw enough in my countenance to make him know I was extremely dissatisfied at it. What, cried he, is it with frowns and downcast eyes, that you receive the news of such a blessing? throw off so perverse a sullenness, and prepare to treat the Count, who will be here this night, with that respect and gratitude which his services demand from my family, or resolve to be no more a part of it, but an alien for ever from my name and favour. Nothing can be more certain, that had I confessed the impossibility there was for me to return the Count's affection, and the obligations I had laid myself under to Lorenzo, the friendship he had for the former of them, would have raised his indignation to the utmost violence against me; and *fear* at that time getting the better of my *love*, I fell at his feet, entreating his forgiveness, and assuring him of a perfect obedience; at which he appeared satisfied. But easily perceiving I was far from being so in reality, left me to myself, believing that the best way to calm the disorders of my soul, and make it fit to receive the impression he desired. But Oh! when

when at liberty to give a loose to thought, and to reflection, heaven only knows the agonies I sustained; the idea of my dear Lorenzo, his passionate affection, the solemn contract we had made, the reiterated vows by which it was confirmed, came fresh into my mind, and made me for some moments resolve to endure all things, rather than make this double sacrifice of my love and faith: but then my father's power, the fear of being turned out a beggar, and the possibility that, in such a disgraced and distressful state, Lorenzo, for whose sake I should become so, might also abandon me. The miseries of poverty, and the un pitying world's contempt and censure, glared on my terrified imagination, and worked so far on the timorousness of my nature, as to counterbalance all that the softer passion could suggest, and even absolve my breach of vow. Long did I struggle in this painful conflict, and wholly unable to determine to which of the prevailing dictates I should yield, at last a medium presented itself, which flattered me with some hope of evading the wretchedness I feared, in suffering myself to be overcome by either; it was to dissemble a contentment in the Count's addresses, and by seeming not to oppose my father's will, gain time and opportunity to disappoint it totally. When the Count came, I treated him with that respect which was due to his quality, and the obligations we had received from him; nor did he expect more at his first visit, from a maid of my



my years; in those he afterwards made me, I discovered him to be master of so many perfections, that tho' my vow and inclinations bound me to Lorenzo, I could not help thinking, that I might have been infinitely happy in such a husband. In a word, I had all the esteem and friendship for him that one can have for the most amiable and deserving brother: but this was not that sort of affection he wished to inspire me with, and he could not forbear complaining of my coldness in terms the most moving that love and wit could form. A thousand times have I been about to let him into the secret of my soul, and generously confess, that I had unwarily bestowed my heart and faith, before I knew the honour he intended me; had I done so, I might have saved that dreadful scene which too soon ensued. But shame, and the fear of being exposed to the indignation of my father, or rather my ill genius, would not suffer me to make this declaration, which alone could have been of service. For often since has Count Caprera protested to me in the most solemn manner, that had he known the true state of my heart, he would have desisted his suit, and chose rather to have been unhappy himself, than have made me so by an enforced marriage. But he, alas! was far from guessing at the truth, nor had I power to inform him. But it was not so with my father. He had intelligence of the private meetings I still had with Lorenzo, and doubted not but it was the

the violence of my affection for him, that made me receive the addressees of the Count with so little pleasure. I had till now prevailed on him to defer our marriage, under the pretence that time might make me enter into it with less reluctance. But he was no longer to be put off by these excuses, he knew too well my secret, and was resolved to disappoint whatever intentions I might have in favour of my passion: but my father, with Lorenzo, coming one morning into my chamber with a sternness in his air and countenance, which, before he spoke, gave me to understand some part of my misfortune. Anziana, said he, your tears, and pretended aversion for marriage, have hitherto persuaded me to delay the performance of that promise I long since made to Count Caprera; but I am now too well informed of the reasons which have made you blind to that happiness, heaven offers you in a husband of his quality and merit, and am determined that this day shall be the last of your continuing in a virgin state; or if you refuse to obey me, of being called my daughter. Chuse, therefore, either to be the most fortunate and envied woman in Venice, by marrying with this nobleman, or quit my house, my name, and fight for ever, and become the most accurst, abandoned, despised, and wretched of your sex. It was to no purpose that I threw myself at his feet, entreated, wept, almost died before him. No rocks were more immoveable than his relentless

less breast; nor could all my prayers, my tears, my swoonings, obtain even one day more: as soon as he was gone out of the room, I sent my woman, who was privy to my most secret thoughts, in search of Lorenzo, to whom I ordered her to relate the whole truth of what had passed, resolving, if he gave any encouragement to my elopement, to leave my father's house, and dare all the miseries he had threatened me with, rather than become false to my love and vows; but, unfortunately for both, he was gone that morning to the house of a relation, who lived at a good distance from Venice, and had sent for him on some extraordinary business. What could I now do? to whom could I have recourse? or what security for protection from the insults of a barbarous world? Much had I heard of the inconstancy and thanklessness of faithless men, and how could I be sure Lorenzo was not one of those? That peace of mind which I must forfeit in marrying with the Count, I look'd on as a trifle, when compared with the loss of my reputation, and the want of the necessaries of life: and as for the faith I had vowed to Lorenzo, I doubted not, but the necessity I was under, would excuse me from a breach of it. I loved the one indeed with an unquenchable affection, and had but a bare esteem for the other; it was therefore the utmost violence to my inclinations, even but to think of complying with my father's commands, but as I could foresee no-  
 thing

thing but misery in refusing, I was at last determined to do as he would have me; and to that end sent my woman to him, hearing he was in his closet, to let him know I was ready to obey him. But alas! she was no sooner departed with the message, than the idea of that dear loved youth rose with its charms in my tormented soul, upbraiding me with perjury and ingratitude, levity, and cowardice of nature; methought I saw him dying with despair, and crying out to heaven to revenge his wrongs. Fully possessed with this imagination, I was about to call my woman back, and true to love despise all other ills: as I was rising from my chair with this intention, a book fell from the shelf, some accident happen'd to shake it just upon my head, which opening, I saw had the title of *L'Inconstance d'Amour*, a little French novel, which I remembered to have read some time before, and that it contained several little histories of the ingratitude of mankind, and the little they thought themselves obliged even from the greatest condescensions our sex could take: I looked on this accident as a kind of warning to me, not to trust too much to their honour, and instead of pursuing my design, began to read in it, where the first story I happened to cast my eyes on, was a kind of parallel with my own; it being of a young lady who had forsook her father, friends and country, for the dear sake of love; yet had no sooner reduced herself to that extremity which she

want



want of them must infallibly draw on, than the ungrateful wretch, for whom she was become thus miserable, told her, he was sorry for what had befallen her, that he would be her friend as far as a few pieces, or give her a character to get a service if she were disposed to accept of one; but she could not expect he would marry a woman in her circumstances. Good GOD! cried I, as I was reading, should Lorenzo be of this humour, what an extravagance of wretchedness would be my portion? and why should I hope a better fate, who pretends to love, but says and swears as much as he has done? But put the case, continued I, after a little reflection, that he should excel his sex as much in honour, as he does in all personal perfections; what happiness could there be in such a state of obligation and dependance? Would not his friends and kindred be perpetually upbraiding him, that he had married a woman without any other dowry than her love? would not my clothes, nay my very meat, be cavilled at, as too extravagant? I cannot bear the thought, cried I again, and will pursue my resolution. It is reason bids me, and all the softening follies of my inclinations fly before his force. I was thus debating within myself, when my woman returned, and told me, my father was infinitely pleased with my return to duty, and had sent me, to grace the ceremony he was preparing to solemnize that night, a string of diamonds for my neck, of a vast largeness,

ness, and the most glorious lustre I had ever seen. I was all my life a great admirer of fine things, and as it was merely the fear of being obliged to live without them, that had made me yield to marry the Count; so this addition, to those my father's indulgence had before bestowed on me, greatly strengthened me in that resolution. To make it yet more firm, the Count sent me by his gentleman a bracelet of pearl, which an ancestor of his had taken from the Turks; and was the most orient and richest of any in the republick. To add to all these baits, several relations, who my father had invited to be present at the marriage, seemed, the whole day, each to endeavour to outvie the other in praising Count Caprera. His wit, his elegance of behaviour, his fine shape, the delicacy of his complexion, the gracefulness of his air, his good humour, honour, generosity, the greatness of his family, and the immense sums of money his father had left him in possession of, were the only topicks of conversation, and all agreed, that I could not but be extremely blest in such a husband. Betwixt the variety of company and discourse, my spirits were so much hurried, that I had no leisure for reflection, and Lorenzo was either not remembered, or in such a manner as to be no hinderance to the compleating the wishes of his rival. We were married about eight at night, by my father's chaplain, and after a magnificent collation put to bed. But here, what the noise  
and

and bustle of the day repelled, the silence of the night called back; not Caprera, but Lorenzo, was now the subject of my meditations, and it was in vain that that obliging husband repeated the vow he had given before the priest in a more soft and endearing manner, than those who had the ordering of the ceremony had ever tenderness enough to form; the absent lover took up all my thoughts, and that reluctance with which I suffered his embraces, was not, as he then imagined, owing to a virgin bashfulness, but to the ardency of my wishes for another: I now found that love had not lost the least ground in my heart, and having, but by the extremity of my fear, been compelled a while to screen its influence, those fears removed, blazed out again with the same violence as ever. Never was there a more unhappy bride; the night I pass in tears, and early in the morning I forsook my bed, in spite of the Count's endeavours to detain me; and going into my closet with my favourite woman, disburthened some part of the heavy anguish of my soul in complaints: fain would I have written to Lorenzo, to acquaint him with what I had been compelled to do, and entreat his pardon for my breach of vow; but could not venture to do it while he remained at so great a distance, not thinking it safe to trust a letter of that consequence to the post. With the utmost impatience I longed for his return, flattering myself that I should be more at ease, when he

he should let me know he had forgiven my involuntary crime; in languishments unbecoming the character of a wife; tho' then I thought them innocent, did I linger out the days of his absence; the Count and my father omitting nothing which they thought might bring me into a better humour; tho' the latter of them, whenever he was alone, did not fail to tell me, that he was not unacquainted with the motive of my disgust, and that if *balsams* failed to work, *corrosives* hereafter should be applied. But neither threats nor persuasions were of any effect to make me alter my manner of behaviour; and it is most certain, that had not the Count loved me to a very great degree of tenderness, he must have hated and despised me for my ingratitude, and forgetfulness of the station to which he had raised me.

At length my fatal wishes had success, Lorenzo returned to Venice, which I no sooner was informed of, then I sent my confident to him with a letter which contained these lines.

“ To Signior LORENZO,

“ IT is needless to tell you, that I have put  
 “ Count Caprera in possession of that  
 “ title which ought only to be yours. I  
 “ doubt not but you are already sufficiently  
 “ informed of my seeming guilt, but of my  
 “ real innocence you are not, you cannot yet  
 “ be sensible of. You know not with what  
 “ seve-



“severities I was threatened by a barbarous  
“and inexorable father, nor can you guess  
“how terrible was the conflict I endured  
“betwixt love and duty; be assured, you  
“never were dearer than at that moment  
“when I gave myself for ever from you,  
“nor can the name of Caprera make any  
“change in my sentiments; I am Anziana  
“still, and the lover of Lorenzo. Fate, cruel  
“fate, has disposed my person to another,  
“but the better part of me, my soul, is ever  
“yours. Oh! then forgive what it was im-  
“possible to avoid, without being driven to  
“extremities, such as would have made me  
“despair of retaining your affections, the  
“only thing I ever hoped, the only one I  
“ever feared; yes, you must pardon me, must  
“pity, and must love me too; nor can I  
“think that with a crime against him, to  
“whom compulsion, not inclination, gave  
“my hand; but were it so, it is here excuse-  
“ed by the necessity. I have been so much  
“accustomed to proofs of your affection,  
“that they make a part of my life, and when  
“they cease, the other must infallibly be at  
“an end: I believe it not impossible to con-  
“trive a meeting with you; if so, I charge  
“you, do not fail to come; I am distracted  
“till I see you, and receive that consolation  
“in my misfortunes, which it is in your  
“power to afford to the unhappy, but not  
“inconstant

“ANZIANA.”

“P. S. Write

“ P. S. Write to me by the bearer, consider opportunities of this kind are now become scarce ; and if you can think of any means to see me, more easy to be accomplished than I have yet been able to hit upon, communicate them to this faithful girl, who knows, as well as I, the restraint I labour under, not by the observance of a husband, but a jealous father.

“ Adieu, dearest of mankind.”

I ought to blush, continued Anziana, in repeating to you the contents of this letter, which are indeed of such a nature, as might make the least censorious believe, I had a meaning in them very different from that virtue I profess ; but I protest to you, with the same sincerity as I shall answer heaven, that I was wholly free from any thought of ill ; I longed indeed to see him, I passionately desired that he would continue to love me, and how far I might have been prevailed on by that desire and his entreaty, had I been permitted to indulge it in frequent conversations with him, I cannot, dare not to answer ; but fate thought it sufficient to make me *miserable* without rendering me *vicious* also, and contented with the sacrifice I had made of my *peace*, suffered me not to resign my *virtue*.

He received my letter not with the transports of rage which I expected, and whatever discontents the news of my marriage had occasioned, they were more than balanced by the pleasure

pleasure he took in the willingness I express, of continuing a correspondence with him. The person who I sent to him, was a woman of an excellent penetration; and she assured me, in terms as plain as the station she was in would permit her to do to a mistress, that Lorenzo was not that disinterested lover we had believed him to be: she forbore, however, to express what it was she thought of him, till I had read his letter, the contents whereof are written in my heart, and never can be forgot; they were in this manner.

*“To my forever adorable ANZIANA.*

“**T**HOU’ I might justly enough complain  
 “ of your want of faith in my repeated  
 “ assurances, that no change of circumstan-  
 “ ces should have the power to alter that in-  
 “ delible affection I had vowed; yet to prove  
 “ how much beyond my own I prize your in-  
 “ terest, I wish you all the happiness the mar-  
 “ riage-bed can yield: nor do I envy Capre-  
 “ ra the possession of your person, since you  
 “ so transportingly assure me, that your heart  
 “ is mine. You have been accustomed to  
 “ utter nothing but sacred truth; if this is so,  
 “ I should be the most unreasonable and un-  
 “ grateful of my sex, not to be highly satis-  
 “ fied with my condition; for what may not  
 “ the happy he, who rules the heart, com-  
 “ mand! I have been talking to your obli-  
 “ ging messenger, and she thinks it not im-  
 “ possible

“ possible that I might be admitted into your  
 “ own house, late at night, when all the fa-  
 “ mily are in bed ; you pretending an indis-  
 “ position, to avoid lying with the Count——  
 “ I mention this method, as the most safe one  
 “ for your reputation ; for though, doubtless,  
 “ either of us would be welcome alone at our  
 “ usual rendezvous ; yet as you know they  
 “ are people of a scrupulous virtue, and we  
 “ used to meet on other terms than now we  
 “ can be supposed to do, they might think  
 “ the liberty they allowed me with Anziana  
 “ a fault, if indulged with the wife of Count  
 “ Caprera : it will be just the same, if seen  
 “ together in any other place. I see no hazard  
 “ of discovery at your own house ; but if by  
 “ any unexpected means such a misfortune  
 “ should arrive, be assured of my inviolable  
 “ integrity, and that I would sooner lose my  
 “ life than confess I came thither with your  
 “ knowledge ; or had any entertainment from  
 “ you, but such as drove me to despair. I  
 “ would have you consider of it however,  
 “ and if you approve of this proceeding, let  
 “ me know the time and hour when I may  
 “ hope to seize my own, and triumph over  
 “ him, who has but by force made himself  
 “ master of the right of

“ The ever faithful and

“ passionately devoted

“ LORENZO.”

C

“ P. S. You



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“ P. S. You must extremely wrong the  
 “ passion you have inspired, if you believe not  
 “ I shall attend a second mandate with the  
 “ extremest impatience. Remember that it  
 “ is your part, not mine, to pity ; and I ex-  
 “ pect you to show a bright example, how  
 “ much you dare for love and gratitude.”

It is impossible to express what it was I felt at reading this letter ; never had I before experienced such an astonishment ; such a shock. What means he, cried I out, as soon as I came to the conclusion, by “ Integrity, seizing his  
 “ own, and triumphing over him, who by  
 “ force is become master of his right ?” He talks as if I had invited him to wrong the Count ; and had no other notion of continuing a conversation with him, than to carry on a shameful intrigue. Heaven ! how have I been deceived in the disposition of this man ; I thought he loved me with so pure a flame, that sensual enjoyment never was thought on by him ; but now I find his wishes had no other aim, and flattered by the mistaken kindness of my letter, imagines, there wants only an opportunity to gratify them ; and believes I am a prostitute in my nature, and that the vilest passion has dominion over my soul. I could not, for some time, enough compose myself, to hear what my woman had to say ; but when she spoke, it was as I before informed you ; and intimating, that he expected nothing less than to possess me with the same freedom,

freedom, as he would have been allowed to do, were he in Count Caprera's place, I was in the utmost rage with myself, for having written in a manner to give room for such a thought: but as my designs were wholly innocent, and meant no more than to convert the love we had bore each other, into as ardent a friendship, I was ashamed to think I had so much tenderness for a man of so low and groveling a soul, and who now appeared to know no more of love than the meanest part of it, that which the difference of sex excites. I despised him so heartily, that I know not if what I felt for him, for some moments, might not be called loathing: my woman, ever faithful to my interest and fame, failed not to say every thing in her power, to heighten this disgust; vain she would have persuaded me to send to him no more; or if I did, to write in such a manner as should convince him of the error he had been in, and ashamed ever to see me more. But this advice did not relish with me, I still persisted in my intention of seeing him, whatever hazard I ran; I fancied I could make a profelyte of him; and was pleased to think, how great a glory it would be to convert this gross and sooty flame into one all pure and elemental. The love of souls I aimed to inspire, that so we might enjoy a noble, disinterested, and Platonick friendship. This, as far as I can be judge of my own heart, was my design; how far it would have succeeded, heaven only knows,

for I was, in a fatal manner, prevented from making the experiment. But to proceed gradually with my story, after the consideration of about a week, I writ to him in these terms.

“ *To Signior* LORENZO.

“ **T**HAT I answered yours no sooner,  
 “ was owing to the uncertainty I was  
 “ in, in what manner I should do it; and I  
 “ know not, if virtue will not be offended,  
 “ that I hold any correspondence with a man,  
 “ whose designs appear to be so much the re-  
 “ verse of those inspired by her. For heaven’s  
 “ sake, what has emboldened you to hope,  
 “ from the wife of Count Caprera, what you  
 “ never dared to ask from Anziana? If judging  
 “ of your innocence by my own, I desired  
 “ the continuance of your friendship; which  
 “ of my past actions have given you cause to  
 “ make so vile a construction of my meaning?  
 “ How could you dare suspect me guilty of a  
 “ dishonourable thought? I told you, indeed,  
 “ that I was still your lover, but it was with such  
 “ a kind of love that I regarded you, as an-  
 “ gels pay to each other in the realms of  
 “ bliss; all pure and intellectual, free from  
 “ all gross desires or earthly appetite. If I  
 “ look on the breach of my vow to you as a  
 “ crime, which, though enforced, requires  
 “ my whole life’s penitence to atone; how  
 “ can you think I would voluntarily violate  
 “ that I have made to Count Caprera before  
 “ the

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“ the holy priest ? Such love as a chaste brother may to a sister give, I shall rejoice to find from you ; and such, and no other, can I pay to you. If you think this worthy your acceptance, and that we can converse together in such a manner, as to have nothing to apprehend from our own consciences, we shall be the better enabled to condemn what the world may say of us, should our conversation be discovered ; tho’ not to give occasion for censure, I will contrive to keep as private as possible. Send me word, after you have well examined the nature of your desires, if you can restrain them within the limits I prescribe, and you shall see with what speed I will meet the lover of my soul. But endeavour not to deceive yourself or me ; pretend not to be what you are not, nor imagine I do so ; or that I am, or ever will be, one step beyond what honour will permit,

“ Your lover, or your friend,

“ ANZIANA.”

“ P. S. Burn my letters, as I do yours the moment I receive them ; but lay the contents of this up in your heart ; that if you swerve in any point from the injunction it lays you under, you may not plead forgetfulness. Adieu, as you persevere in virtue you shall continue to be dear to me.”

Fool that I was, and vain on the power of my own persuasion, I doubted not but this



letter would make a convert of him, and longed for my messenger's return, which I was perfectly assured in my mind would bring me an answer, such as I wished; nor was I greatly deceived, he had too much of the artifice of his sex in him to contradict what I said, till he had an opportunity to benefit himself by it; at least I judge so by what I have since been told: the contents of what he wrote ran thus.

*" To the excellent ANZIANA.*

" **V**IRTUE, fair angel, has many  
 " branches, nor is chastity always the  
 " most shining one it bears; gratitude and  
 " compassion are allowed to be the prime  
 " graces of humanity; and when opposed to  
 " these, the other degenerates to a vice. Is  
 " it to be of a piece with heaven, to destroy  
 " the man who adores you, to inflict curses  
 " where blessings are implored, and be cruel  
 " to a wretch who throws himself upon your  
 " mercy? Oh consider, Anziana; nor let a  
 " too strict adherence to one virtue, make  
 " you become guilty of injuring all the others.  
 " Even justice too you forfeit, since you were  
 " mine before you were Caprera's: how often,  
 " dear perjured beauty! have you called  
 " heaven and every saint to witness, that you  
 " never would be another's; and if compelled  
 " by arbitrary power to falsify those vows,  
 " must you also join in the wrong? You  
 " might be forced into the arms of the Count,  
 " but

“ but by your own will are only debarred  
 “ from mine. I sollicit you, therefore, not  
 “ to an act of shame, but justice: I will,  
 “ however, insist no farther on this theme  
 “ till I have the blessing of your presence; if  
 “ what I have then to say proves ineffectual, I  
 “ will be dumb for ever on it. On this you may  
 “ depend, that I shall never have recourse to  
 “ violence; and if unable to convince you,  
 “ that what I ask is not a crime to grant,  
 “ would not receive it on any terms, which  
 “ to reflect on hereafter, might give you dis-  
 “ content, or the least shadow of remorse.  
 “ Believe me, that your peace of mind is of  
 “ infinite more value to me than my own;  
 “ and that if it can be preserved by no other  
 “ means, than relinquishing those hopes to  
 “ which our contract had given me a pre-  
 “ tence, will make a sacrifice of them, and  
 “ confine myself hereafter to the bounds you  
 “ set, however painful or fatal they may  
 “ prove. You are the mistress of my soul;  
 “ all its faculties are at your devotion; and  
 “ to be directed by you; dispose therefore as  
 “ you please of

“ Your ever faithful

“ and most obedient slave,

“ LORENZO.”

Tho’ the beginning of this letter gave me  
 some uneasiness, the latter part of it entirely  
 dissipated it; and I rested assured, that he would  
 be indeed as conformable to my will as he

had promised, and resolved to give him a meeting as soon as I could contrive the means. I considered on what he had proposed, and I found nothing in it but what was safe enough; but the tenderness the Count had for me would not suffer it to succeed; for when I feigned an indisposition, and desired to sleep in my own bed, that indulgent husband would needs quit his also, and watch by me: but a small time presented me with an opportunity more ample than I could have hoped. Some disturbance happening among the tenants on our land in the country, my father was obliged to go thither in person; he desired Count Caprera to accompany him, believing his presence, who in the right of me was to be their future lord, might be of service on this occasion; he would not refuse my father, and thinking the journey might be too great a fatigue to me, being then great with child, they departed, and I was left at full liberty to do as I pleased. They had no sooner left the house, than I took pen and paper, and wrote to Lorenzo in these terms.

*To Signior LORENZO.*

“THE long-wished moment is at last  
 “arrived, my father and husband,  
 “those diligent observers of my every action,  
 “are both removed; and before they can re-  
 “turn, I shall have many opportunities to  
 “perfect the work I have begun. This night,  
 “about

“ about twelve, the family will be all in bed,  
 “ all but myself and faithful maid, who will  
 “ attend to admit you. Remember the con-  
 “ ditions on which I grant this liberty, and  
 “ give me no cause, as you say, hereafter to  
 “ repent my condescension. Yours,

“ ANZIANA.”

“ P. S. A gentle rap against the window-  
 “ shutter shall be the sign; take care that  
 “ there are no passengers in the street when  
 “ you make it. ‘Till then, farewell.”

I dispatched my woman with this, with a  
 haste and impatience which was not usual  
 with me; and might therefore have served as  
 an omen of its fatality, had I been capable  
 of reflecting on it. She discharged her trust  
 with her ordinary fidelity, and was returning  
 to me with an answer, when my father and  
 the Count, having met with some company  
 in the street, which had delayed their taking  
 horse, were just passing by the house of Lo-  
 renzo, that ill-starred moment as she came out  
 of it. The former of them knowing well  
 who it was that dwelt there, and fired with  
 a jealousy of the honour of his family,  
 caught hold of her, and bidding her make  
 no disturbance, go along with him. The  
 terror and surprize she was in, would not  
 suffer her to have presence enough of mind to  
 form any excuse, if there had been a possibi-  
 lity of making one for such a visit; and a  
 house being near, over the master of which



my father had an influence, he thrust her in; my husband followed, but was too much overwhelmed with wonder to ask the meaning of what he saw, 'till my father eased him of it, by calling the poor trembling wench all the opprobrious names his fury could invent; such as the bawd of her mistress's shame, and witness of her dishonour; and not doubting but she had some letter about her, which searching for, he immediately found one in her bosom, which contained enough to make him imagine himself confirmed in the truth of what he feared. I have had it too often repeated to be capable of forgetting it; the words were these.

*“ To the lovely, and forever beloved ANZIANA.*

“ **T**O go about to inform you of the rap-  
 “ tures with which I received yours,  
 “ would be as vain an endeavour, as it is to  
 “ represent my impatience for that dear hour,  
 “ which is to put me in possession of a blessing  
 “ I have so long languished for. To think  
 “ that I shall see Anziana again, and be per-  
 “ mitted to converse with her as I have done,  
 “ when no curst ties made her another's right;  
 “ is such a profusion, such an extravagance  
 “ of delight, as is almost fatal to me; and I  
 “ have scarce breath to speak my thanks.  
 “ But our kind confident, who sees my tran-  
 “ sports, will be better able to make a de-  
 “ scription of them, than all I can say. De-  
 “ pend

"pend on every thing, thou sovereign of my  
"soul, that you would wish to find in

"The most faithful, and most

"obsequious of mankind,

"LORENZO."

This did my father read aloud to the Count, and by what I have told you of his passion for me, it is easy for you to guess into what an excess of jealous rage it must transport him. There was all the room in the world for him to believe I was carrying on an intrigue, the most dishonourable that could be; he knew not the conditions on which I had consented to admit him; and I cannot, without being guilty of partiality, but confess that there was a warmth in this letter, which had no affinity with a Platonick love. It is difficult to say, whether my father or husband were now most incensed against me, nor which formed the most cruel stratagems of revenge on him, by whom they imagined themselves injured and affronted; but between them, there was one contrived, which I know not if any age can parallel, and I am sure none can exceed. They ordered my woman to be fast bound, and locked in an upper room; having first, with their drawn daggers at her throat, compelled her to write a billet to me, containing these lines.

"To ANZIANA, Countess of CAPRERA.

"AN accident, such as will take up  
"more time than I can now afford  
"to relate, takes me from the honour of

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" your service. It may be long before I en-  
 " joy the happiness of returning. I send this  
 " therefore to let you know, I delivered the  
 " letter, you entrusted me with, safe into the  
 " hands of Signior Lorenzo, who cannot  
 " enjoy the blessing you would bestow on  
 " him; this night being, as he says, obliged  
 " to attend the issue of an affair on which his  
 " life depends. I wish you could be able to  
 " forget him entirely, or think on him but  
 " as a man unworthy of your favour. I am  
 " with all respect and duty,

" Your Ladyship's

" most devoted and faithful servant,

" LAWANA."

It was to no purpose that this poor creature  
 attested my innocence, by all the asseverations  
 she was capable of making; it appeared evi-  
 dent to them, that if I had not already been  
 guilty in fact, I intended to be so that night;  
 and therefore leaving her in the house where  
 they had first carried her, they went to the  
 place where their attendants waited with the  
 horses; they ordered them to pursue their jour-  
 ney, telling them, they would overtake them  
 the next day. This being done, they con-  
 cealed themselves in the skirts of the town  
 where they were not known, till the approach  
 of night; when, disguised and muffled in their  
 cloaks, they returned, and waited at the end  
 of a back lane, through which they knew  
 Lorenzo must be obliged to pass; and as soon

as they saw him, without giving him the least warning of his fate, plunged both their daggers in his breast, on which he immediately fell; the place being extremely private, gave them no apprehensions of any person coming along, and they tarried by the dead body, till some men, whom they had ordered at that hour, came and joined them, and carried it to the house of a surgeon, who had been brought up in the family of Count Caprera, and was entirely at his devotion. Revenge not satiated even with the death of the supposed offender, this cruel husband and father pursued it farther yet, denying the rites of burial to the lifeless bones, which they ordered to be clean scraped, and disrobed of all their flesh, and then set up in the manner you see. For that, oh Miramillia! continued she, pointing to the anatomy, that dreadful spectacle was the once gay admired Lorenzo.

Here the bursting grief broke in a second time on her discourse, and she was compelled to give some time to it, before she could proceed; which at last she did in these words.

Little was I capable of guessing what had happened, yet was I seized with a strange disorder at the receipt of Lawrana's billet; and when afterward I was told by some, who little imagined how nearly I was interested in the news, that Lorenzo was absconded none knew where, I was not without feeling some jealous pangs; it entered into my head, that my woman had subverted me in his esteem, and the



the remonstrances she had daily given me, not to indulge too far the tenderness I had for him, confirmed me in that opinion. The girl was young, well bred, had a great deal of wit, and a more than ordinary share of beauty; and to have them both missing at the same time, gave a kind of reason for this conjecture: the letter she had wrote to me, took from me all suspicion of the truth; and it never once came into my thoughts, that what had passed between us, had reached either my father, or my husband; but if it had, the letters which I received from them every post, would have dispelled such an imagination; both writing to me with a tenderness, which I could not have expected from them, had I believed they had been sensible of my conduct. It was, it seems, the advice of Count Caprera, that they should dissemble with me in this manner, till the time of my delivery, which now drew near, was arrived. At their return to Venice, nothing could I read in either of their countenances, which could give me cause to think they were displeased with me, and the indulgence they shewed me, with the supposed infidelity of Lorenzo, by degrees abated the passion I had for him, I grew perfectly tranquil and easy in my mind. Oh! had I ne'er been undeceived, I had been happy; but the hour which was to make me a mother being come, how prodigiously was I alarmed, when I saw my husband and my father enter the chamber, leading between  
them

them a priest, who had formerly been my confessor, but had of late been absent on a foreign visitation: the women being desired to withdraw into another room, he began to talk to me of the duties of confession, and the little hope there was of finding mercy at the eternal judgment-seat for any person who left this world, without having first received absolution from those whose business it was to give it, which, as he said, could not be done without revealing all the remembered transgressions of our lives. You are now in a condition, continued he, which brings death so near you, that the eternal dart hangs over your head, waiting but the Almighty's word to strike you to the center. Beware then, that you have not yet some undiscovered sin, which hangs upon your conscience, nor let shame, or fear of what any mortal power can do, prevail on you to hide it. Speak, and be forgiven; or dying in silence, expect no mercy. He said much more to the same purpose, I being too much disordered, between pain and wonder, to reply; but when, by repeated abjurations, urged to speak, I assured him, that I had nothing to reveal, but what I had already confessed to him, who was my spiritual director. But that is not sufficient, cried my father *sternly*, a vast estate depends on the heir you are about to bring into the world, and must not be the portion of a spurious race; answer with the same truth, as you must do at that dread tribunal, where, perhaps, you may in a few moments appear,

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appear, if it be to your husband, Count Caprera, that the production of this yet unborn is owing; and if no other man has ever prevailed on the weakness of your sex, in prejudice of your honour, and your vow. The surprize I had been in to what this visit tended, now gave way to an adequate rage, when I found it was occasioned by jealousy. What! cried I, am I suspected and taxed in this cruel manner of a crime my soul abhors? Ungrateful man! pursued I, turning to the Count, since thou couldst think me false, believe me still so; nor can I do less than inflict the punishment of doubt for such a wrong. So great was my fury at that time, that I believe, tho' my father protested the women should not come into my assist ancetill I had made a more positive answer to the question proposed to me, I should rather have chose death, than have given the satisfaction they required; if the interest of my child, who they both swore should be an outcast as soon as born, had not prevailed on me; and I at length gave my oath, that never had I yielded to the rites of love, but with the Count my husband. This done, they left me, and the women were permitted to come in; but I was so disordered with the late treatment I had received, that it very much increased the danger of my condition, and my life was despaired of by every body in the room: I was, however, at last delivered of the eldest of those sons you see here. But never mother less rejoiced in being so; instead of the

congratula-

congratulations I expected from a father and a husband, and those obliging tenderneſſes, for which women chearfully go through that dreadful moment, mine regarded me but with frowns, and ſullen diſcontent, civil to me but when other company was preſent. It is certain, that whatever people may pretend, grief without the aſſiſtance of ſome other diſeaſe will never kill; it may by degrees conſume the ſpirits, and decay the body, but not deſtroy it immediately, elſe had not I ſurvived the treatment I then endured; much leſs that which ſoon after was my lot. The Count, who to that ſpirit of revenge, which is natural to the Italians in general, had a more than ordinary ſhare of it in his compoſition; and tho' he was now pretty well convinced I had not wronged him in fact, was certain in his own mind, that I had done ſo in intention; and that the other alſo had not been wanting, had it not been prevented by the death of Lorenzo; it was not in his power to inflict more on him. I muſt be the next, therefore, that felt the force of his indignation; and tho' the condition I had been in, had till now prevented him from letting it looſe upon me, now was the time to vent the long pent-up paſſion of his ſtruggling ſoul, and ſhew me that all the love he had borne me, was not ſufficient to combat with the dictates of his more prevailing reſentment. I was ſcarce able to go out of my chamber, when he told me, he had a ſpectacle to preſent me with, which had formerly  
afforded



afforded me much satisfaction. And taking me by the hand, led me to this closet, where he had ordered the bones of the unfortunate Lorenzo to be placed as they still remain, tho' I had no more than an indistinct guess at the dreadful truth; yet an object so astonishing, so shocking, had almost deprived me of my senses, before I knew the causes I had for grief. But when he related the story, and with a barbarous pleasure dwelt on the cruel triumph he had gained, my spirits, weakened with pain and inward discontent, were grown too weak to sustain a discovery so alarming, and I fell motionless at the feet of this vindictive husband. He made use of his utmost endeavours, indeed, to recover me; but when he had, what exclamations did I not utter? What did I not say of upbraiding and reproachful? How did now all my former tenderness for Lorenzo return, and with what an extremity of detestation look upon his murderers? The names of father and husband were too little to awe the present fury of my soul. A thousand times I cried out to them to complete their cruelty, and send me to my dear Lorenzo; nay, was but with the greatest care and diligence prevented from giving myself that death, which they denied me. The violence of my passion, I think, abated that of the Count's, and he began to treat me with more mildness; and at last, to endeavour, by all the ways he could invent, to alleviate my discontents, but I refused to listen to any thing he said;

said; and one time, when he was more than ordinarily assiduous about me, I flung from him, and throwing myself on the floor, made a solemn vow, that since he had brought Lorenzo to me, tho' not in a condition to know, or to reward my constancy, no day of my ensuing life should pass, without some part of it being spent with him. For many months did I refuse either to sleep or eat with the Count, who I never called by any other title, than that of murderer, ruffian, and base assassin; but passions which rage with that violence mine did, are seldom of long continuance. The tenderness he now resumed for me, the penitence he now expressed for what the impatience of his jealousy had made him act, at length won me to forgive him, and endeavour to compose myself. It is now ten years since this affair happened, and time, as it decays all things, has deprived my griefs of their former poignancy. In compliance with my vow, however, I devote an hour every day to the memory of Lorenzo, in this recess, which is the repository of all that now remains of him. Lawrana was, some time after the discovery, released of her confinement, and permitted to attend me as formerly: she is very often my companion in this sad employment, and we join the mournful accents of our sighs for poor Lorenzo's fate. The decorum of the world, the love I bear my children, whose interest it is I should live well with their father, obliges me to feign a forgetfulness,

getfulness, as much as possible, of what is past, and the real tenderness which I believe he now again feels for me, makes him omit nothing which may induce me to return it. Thus is the secret of our misfortune concealed from all who know us, you are the only person intrusted with it, and I depend wholly on your honour for the preserving it.

Here she ceased, and the other, after assuring her that she never would reveal one syllable of what she had said, told her, she was amazed how she could wear a look of so much serenity, when it could not be, but that her heart must be all confusion and disorder. Custom, replied she, renders all things easy, even dissimulation, to which my nature was ever most averse, by a long habititude I am now grown perfect in; besides, it is no inconsiderable lightening to the weight of my afflictions, that I give a loose to them in this closet. My mind disburthened of the pressing anguish by the vent I give it in tears, and in complainings here, has something of an unaffected cheerfulness when I forsake this scene of horror. You see, therefore, Miramillia, that there are woes in the world, of a nature infinitely superior to those you labour under, and yet are undiscovered even by the most prying eyes.

They had some farther considerations on this head, after which the sorrowful mother took her leave, being well convinced it was not from Anziana that she could hope to retrieve her dear son. At her return to her own habitation,

bitation, she set herself to think whom she should next address: and in a moment running through the whole class of her acquaintance, she bethought her of a lady, who had been married very young to a gentleman she passionately loved, and was as much beloved by him; but his relations being incensed at the match, had contrived by a stratagem to send him beyond sea, to a place where he could neither write to her, nor receive any letters from her. They were separated for many years, but the person who had occasioned it being called to answer in another world for the cruelty and injustice he had been guilty of in this, the bridegroom was at last returned to the longing arms of his faithful wife. The joy of such a meeting, joined to an affluence of fortune, seemed to promise Miramilia, what she had been disappointed of in Anziana; and as she had been extremely intimate with her, and had comforted her in her afflictions, she doubted not, but she would be as ready to receive her now in this happy reverse of her fate: she, therefore, made all imaginable haste to her house to wish her joy, and to let her know the service she believed was in her power to render her.

She was not deceived in one part of her conjecture; Iseria, for that was the name of the lady she went to visit, embraced her, and seemed infinitely obliged to her, that she added to the number of those, who came to congratulate her on this fortunate turn in her affairs.

Some



Some time was taken up in discourses on ordinary matters; but Miramillia, being full of the business which had brought her thither, entreated to speak to her in private. On which, the other taking her by the hand, led her into a fine garden, at the upper end of which was a grotto; which entering, as soon as they were seated, the sorrowful mother began her story, and repeated the words of the fortune-teller, begged she would make a trial of his truth, by undertaking this little piece of work; for which, she told her, she could not doubt of her being qualified, since she had, in her dear husband, all that she had ever wished to be possesst of. She had no sooner concluded these words, than the other gave so deep a sigh, that the grieved Miramillia, before she spoke, was more than half convinced, her search was not here to end. It is a fault, answered Iseria, to wish with too much ardency, which heaven sometimes punishes with the utmost severity. I cannot say, but that I have found more mercy, and that I cannot call myself unhappy, while I enjoy the society of my dear Montrano, my ever loved, and ever loving husband; yet is there not a person in the world less fit to be employed in the task you mention, than myself. But lest you should suspect my friendship, I will give you a proof of it, which I intended none ever should receive from me, that of revealing to you the truth of my affairs. After which, I shall leave yourself to judge, if by my hands the enchantment you desire can possibly be wrought.

wrought. The other, making no other reply to these words than a low bow, in token that she would take it as a favour, she began the narration she had promised in this manner.



*The History of MONTRANO and ISERIA.*

YOU know, said she, that the passion with which Montrano and myself were mutually inspired, hurried us to a private marriage, without obtaining the consent of Polufino, the uncle of Montrano, and from whom alone he had any dependance; his father having wasted the best part of the estate which was to descend to him on a courtesan, of whom he was so fond, that he quitted one of the best of wives in the world, and lived wholly with her. Polufino, however, had a very plentiful fortune, and having no children of his own, he declared to every body, that the young Montrano should be his heir: I, on the other hand, had but a small dowry, and that too in hands, whence I could not easily call it out; nothing therefore could be more unadvised, than for two people in such circumstances to join in marriage: but love is deaf to reason; the sum of our desires being the enjoyment of each other, we looked on all the misfortunes, which might arise from such a union, as nothing worthy our regard: we took all imaginable care, however, to conceal what we had done from the knowledge of

of Polusino; but our caution was ineffectual, he was informed of it immediately; and scarce two hours had we been in bed, before he broke into the house where we lay, with a great number of armed men; who forcing Montrano to rise, tore him from my trembling arms, and bearing him away, left me in a swoon, which had like to have been fatal to me; for the people of the house, surpris'd at what had happened, came not into the chamber for a considerable time; but when they did, they found me on the floor, naked, cold, and in all appearance dead: they applied things proper for my recovery, however, in case there were any remains of life left in me, which, together with the natural strength of my constitution, at last brought me to myself, contrary to the expectation of all about me. I will not prolong the time by a tedious repetition of the exclamations I made; you may believe they were excessive, and proportioned to the greatness of my misfortune. But how infinitely more wretched, even than what I feared, did I find myself, when the next morning, by break of day, I sent in search of him, and heard, that the next moment to that in which he was ravished from my embraces, he was sent on board a vessel, which then lay ready to set sail, and was bound to some part of the Indies; but which, I could not by any person be resolved. The years of fruitless expectation, which I wasted in hope of his return, or hearing some news  
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of him, are well known to you, who so generously visited me in that distress, and omitted no tender office of friendship to alleviate my sorrows. Seven times had the increasing sun cheered the glad husbandman and blest the fields, while all was winter, and the gloom of night in my sad mind. Polusino, in this time, died, bequeathing his whole fortune to Montrano, if ever he could be heard of; which clause gave a vast addition to my griefs, since till that time I had believed he had not been ignorant where it was he remained, I now not doubted but that he was dead; men are inconstant, variable in their inclinations as the ever-changing wind, said I to myself; but tho' another object taking possession of his heart, he might forget his suffering wife, the consideration of his interest would not permit him to be remiss in his duty to his uncle. No, no, would I cry out, he is not false, eternal truth, and ever-grateful fondness, have on earth no being, but in his mind. But he is dead, he is dead; and it is a prophanation of his memory, to harbour even a thought, to the disadvantage of his honour or his love. I now looked on myself as a widow, wore the habit of one, and endured, perhaps, more real anguish in my heart, than the most truly disconsolate one ever had the capacity of feeling, or than the most artful one had dissimulation enough to affect. Even time relieved not my affliction, my griefs seemed rather strengthened

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by age; and the more I reflected on the merits of Montrano, the more I became inconsolable for his loss. I believe you are not insensible, that every body believing, as I did, that he was dead, I had many who addressed me for marriage; some of their offers appeared too advantageous to be refused, and I was daily pressed by my friends to pitch on one of them; but all my notions of love were dead, when I thought Montrano so, and resolving to devote my future days entirely to his memory, as a grief I thought most just, I made a solemn vow to continue as I was; but that not being effectual to ease me of their importunities, it was my design to retire to a monastery, and was settling my little affairs that I might do so, without having any incumbrance from the world upon me when Montrano returned. I had a maid, who had lived with me from the time that dear youth had first made his addresses to me; and as I was sitting one day, reading in my closet, she came running to me, with all the marks of the most strong amazement written on her countenance. Two gentlemen, said she, with an accent which seemed to hesitate with terror, entreat to speak with you; one must be my Lord Montrano, or his ghost: he has his eyes, his mouth, his very shape and air, only more thin and dejected. It is certain, that this poor girl verily believed she had seen a spirit, for never did I behold a creature in such disorder; but I had

no

no leisure to think on the occasion of it, when he entered the closet; guessing at the surprize I should be in, and having not patience to wait till it should permit me to come down. Iseria! my dear Iseria! cried he, am I again so blest to see you? and with these words snatching me to his breast, prevented my falling on the floor, as I was ready to do, overcome with an excess of joy and wonder. This absence of mind lasted, however, but for a moment, and I again awoke to sense, to thought, and rapture. Impossible would it be, as well as impertinent, to repeat to you the welcomes I gave him, or the softness of his reiterated endearments; there are a thousand little incoherencies in the talk of lovers, which delight beyond expression, yet will be ridiculous when reported afterwards. The accent, the manner, is infinitely more eloquent than the words; and tho' *Love* is frequently obliged to *Wit* to make himself be known; yet *Wit* more often is glad to have recourse to the soft follies of *Love*, to make himself rewarded. Our mutual transports would not permit me immediately to perceive there was a strange gentleman in the room; but when I did, the confusion I was in for having so long neglected him, made me extremely blush; and the more I aimed to apologize for it, the more I found myself at a loss how to do it: but Montrano-guessing at my thoughts, relieved me; and with an admirable address excused me to his friend, who I

soon perceived was a man of excellent good sense and breeding; he made me, in his turn, a great many fine compliments, with which he artfully mingled some praises of Montrano. When heaven, said he, formed a pair compleat like Montrano and the beautiful Iseria, it certainly intended them as happy as they are deserving to be so. It is, therefore, enough to make us call Omnipotence in question; and ascribe too great a power to the infernal potentate, if any misfortune should arrive which might destroy their peace: I should have taken these words as mere gallantry, and regarded them no farther, if I had not seen the face of Montrano covered with a scarlet blush, which was in a moment succeeded by a deadly paleness: and soon a rising tide overwhelmed his down-cast eyes, with difficulty restrained from forcing a passage hence, and gushing out in tears. You may believe so strange a change from all the symptoms of the excess of joy to those of grief, which now I observed in him, filled me with the most shocking surprize; yet resolving to conceal it as much as possible. The misfortunes which threatened us with lasting woe, replied I, are now, I hope, blown over, and all our days to come are harmony and peace. At least, continued I, they must be so, if Montrano feels as sincere a satisfaction in our re-union as Iseria does. I fixed my eyes on his face intently, as I spoke these words, and found so much confusion there, as made me certain in my mind, some-

something extraordinary had happened, which I should know too soon; but what I could not be assured. A thousand apprehensions, all at once, came cross my thoughts, which, tho' I was impatient to discover the truth of, I feared to ask; the disorder in my soul was too visible in my countenance, for both Montrano and his friend not to perceive it; on which the former, assuming an air as much composed as possible, considering the various agitations with which he, doubtless, at that moment was possess'd, and turning to the stranger, My dear Alcestus, said he, Iseria is yet ignorant of the reasons which, till now, prevented me from letting her know she had a living husband: I entreat you will relate them to her, omitting no occurrence, which either you have been an eye-witness of, or have heard from my repetition. I will, in the mean time, indulge reflection in yonder gardens, and pay my thanks to the mighty disposer of all things, that I am permitted once more to see this treasure of my soul; and that I find her in perfect health, and not forgetful of her ever faithful Montrano. He concluded these words with embracing me in so tender a manner, as entirely dissipated all the imaginations I had lately conceived to the prejudice of his constancy: I entreated him to stay while his friend gave me the history of his adventures, or that he would let me know them from his own mouth; but he so earnestly begged, I would allow him the liberty he



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desired, that I at last forbore to press him contrary to his inclinations; and as soon as he had left the room, Alceftus began to execute his commands in these terms.

A person, said he, who was indebted to my father for a considerable sum, having removed himself and his effects to Ceylon, one of the Asiatick Islands, I was obliged to go there; the governor of the fort, being a particular friend of our family, we judged he would have interest enough with the Dutch factory there, to compel the villain to do us justice: I embarked in the same ship, on which Montrano, at the dead of night, was forced on board: we began an intimacy there, which I hope will end not but with our lives; he related to me the history of his passion for you, his marriage, and that that was the reason of his being sent to Ceylon, where one, who had been formerly a servant to his uncle, lived now in great repute; having had the good fortune to please the widow of a Dutch merchant, who made him her husband, and put him in possession of all her effects; which was very considerable. With this person, he told me, he was to tarry till commanded back by his uncle, which he expected would not be soon: he concluded his narration with those praises of you, which your beauty merits, and a thousand vows of an eternal fidelity. Tho' I was extremely troubled at his misfortune, a little motive of self-interest made me pleased, that I had so agreeable a companion

companion in my voyage, and the time I was to remain at Ceylon; but to alleviate his melancholy, I gave him my promise, and indeed spoke no more than I design'd, that I would use the utmost of my endeavours at my return, and to oblige my father to do the same, to prevail on his uncle to recall him: but heaven was pleased to disappoint the designs of us all. After having sailed with a fair wind and prosperous gale, till we came within a few leagues of our intended port, a storm arose as violent as it was sudden; we lost all our masts, the boltsprit was split in two; and after being tost to and fro for several hours, at the pleasure of the waves, a great sea came in, and drove us on a little island belonging to the Maldives, called Ekber, short of Ceylon about seven leagues; it was with great difficulty we got on shore, all those little spots of earth being encompassed with huge craggy rocks, and the savage inhabitants so unskilful in every thing that can be called an art, that their harbours are little better than so many whirl-pools. With an infinite deal of toil and care, however, we at last got our long-boat in, which landing a few men at a time, returned for the rest; but the captain, chief mate, and five mariners, staying till the last, a sudden hurricane rising in a moment, were all lost by the vessel's splitting, as was great part of the cargo; the rest lodged on the rocks, whence they were afterwards brought away by the inhabitants of this

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barbarous place. We soon found, that tho' we had escaped the sea, we were not free from dangers as formidable as that could threaten. We had no sooner gained the shore, than being descried by two or three of the natives, who sending forth a loud cry, they ran up farther into the country, and before we could well resolve in what manner we should behave among a people, who we easily perceived to be wholly uncivilized, we saw near a hundred of them coming towards us; some armed with great branches torn off the trees, some with axes, and a few with bows and arrows: we now repented that we had taken no care to bring our guns from on board, but on second thoughts had rather reason to rejoice; for tho' we could have made a pretty good defence against this little troop, they would certainly have fallen on us in greater numbers, and, over-powered by them, at last been provoked to have given us worse treatment; we therefore opened our arms, and presented to them our naked breasts, in token of submission; on which they seemed to receive us kindly, but drawing round us in a circle, conducted us, hallooing and shouting all the way they went, till we came to a place, which, as we found afterwards, was a kind of market, where slaves, such as we were now become, were disposed of to the best bidder.

In this island, and it seems in most of the others belonging to the Maldives, there is a  
 fort

fort of Incas or king, but all tributary and acknowledging an obedience to one sovereign of all, who resides in Male, the chief of the islands, and styles himself the emperor of thirteen provinces, and of a thousand islands. He has a great number of slaves, and when he comes abroad, is worshipped as a god. There was at this time a person in Ekber employed by him to buy slaves, and the market-day happening to be the next day after we came, we were exposed to sale; myself, with two of our mariners, were chosen for this mighty sovereign, but Montrano was the purchase of the Incas of Alfors, who had sent a messenger thither also on the same errand. The reason that the great market was generally kept at Ekber, was not only because it was the largest of all the islands, but likewise, that, lying at a more considerable distance from any of the others, than they did from one another, and more in the main sea, there was a greater probability of unhappy persons, distressed by weather, taking refuge there than in the others. I thought it a very great addition to my misfortunes, that I was to be separated from Montrano; and I believe he spoke no more than the truth, when he afterwards assured me it was so to him. I will not trouble you with what befel myself in a five-years servitude among these barbarous wretches; the charms of Montrano gained him, for some time, a milder fate. He had been employed in the vile offices, for



which he was bought, not many days, before, as he was working in the garden of the Incas, a piece of paper, folded like a letter, fell at his feet; he took it up, and found it directed, in the Italian language, “To the accomplished slave;” and seeing no person near him, he concluded, it must be thrown from some of the palace-windows. The oddness of the adventure at first gave him an infinite surprize, but curiosity, at length, getting the better of it, he unfolded the letter, in which he found a great jewel; rich, but ill set, according to the manner of so unpolite a country. But the value of this present was no ways considerable, when compared with the knowledge, that there was a person among these Pagans, with whom there was a probability he might converse; casting his eyes therefore hastily over the letter, he found it contained these lines.

“SOME exclamations which I overheard  
 “you make the other day, informed me  
 “that you are my country-man; your air  
 “and mien demonstrate you not to be of the  
 “inferior rank of men; I should be glad to  
 “entertain you in a manner becoming your  
 “rank, but dare not make a publick show  
 “of the regard I have for you, lest it should  
 “be fatal to us both, but will soon contrive  
 “a way to lessen the hardships you endure;  
 “in the mean time, desire you will not fail  
 “to be in the grove of oranges, behind the  
 “banqueting-house, this night, at twelve  
 “o’Clock.

“ o’Clock. Burn this billet, and take care  
 “ to conceal the diamond which I inclosed in  
 “ it, more to give it weight, than that I  
 “ thought such a trifle worthy the notice of a  
 “ man I am resolved to favour.”

There was no name at the bottom, nor was it in his power to form any conjecture, to whom it was he was so much obliged ; it is needless therefore to say he longed, with the utmost impatience, for the hour in which he hoped to have this riddle solved ; you must believe, that in the circumstance of being a slave among the most barbarous people in the world, condemned to offices with which he was no way acquainted, and for want of understanding the language in which he was commanded, little able to comprehend his master’s meaning, was but by stripes made to discover their otherwise unintelligible directions ; languishing his nights, painful his days ; and what doubled the misery of both, was the belief, that his service was eternal ; that the whole remainder of his life must be passed among those wretched savages, for ever debarred from all social conversation, his friends, his country, and his more dear Iseria. You must, I say, believe, madam, that in such a state, it was no inconsiderable consolation to think there was a person of his own country who pitied him, and seemed to have power to afford some mitigation of his misfortunes.

At last the expected moment came, he attended at the appointed place, and had not waited long before he saw by the light of the moon, which at that time shone exceeding bright, an old woman, whom he had often beheld at a distance in the palace, and knew to be an attendant on the wife of the Incas: he told me that he was so much surprized at the sight of her, that he knew not how to receive her with that ceremony, which the station she was in seemed to require, as being the chief favourite of the greatest woman in the island. She perceived the disorder he was in, and approaching him with a smile, I am afraid, said she, in Italian, that the appearance of an old woman may have put a damp to those glorious hopes the letter you received must certainly have inspired you with; but I dare swear, you have too much understanding not to know, that our good genius does not always appear to us in the most pleasing shape. However disagreeable my form may seem, I bring you tidings which may excuse my age and wrinkles. The wife of the Incas of Alfoore, as well as myself, is of your country, both born and bred up in Venice; but her inclinations being somewhat more gay than was consistent with the customs of that republick, she was sent to Brussels, where she had some relations, in order to be made a recluse; I was ordered to attend her to that place, but in our way we happened to meet with a Dutch officer, who being captivated

with the charms of Elphania, for so was then my mistress called, prevailed on her to accompany him to Holland: we lived with him some time, but the inconstancy, natural to mankind, rendering her unhappy in the loss of him, we were reduced to very great hardships, which compelled us to do something contrary to the laws; we were sent to Ceylon, to expiate, by an eternal slavery, a sin, which nothing but necessity could have made us guilty of. Being exposed to sale in the market-place, some persons belonging to this Incas bought us for his service; but we had no sooner arrived here, and were brought into his presence, than he fell so passionately in love with Elphania, that from a slave he raised her to his bed and throne: with this condition only, that she should renounce the christian faith, which she did, and is now the most favoured and best-beloved of any of his queens; tho' he has some of a birth equal to his own. This, continued she, is the sum of our history before your arrival; but since you appeared, my royal mistress has been no more herself, all her days and nights have been taken up with contemplating in her mind, the perfections of her lovely slave; but that passion, which the sight of you inspired, was extremely heightened, when happening to be in a close bower in the garden the other day, unseen by you, she heard you lament your ill fortune, and cry out for death, in terms,  
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she said, the most tender and moving, that tongue ever uttered. She was, however, extremely pleased to find you were an Italian; and her thoughts, which had till then been divided, if she should make you acquainted with the tenderness she had for you or not, were now wholly determined to do it the first opportunity. It is charity, said she to me; it is that natural instinct which prompts us to have a pity for those of our own country, as well as love, which now obliges me to ease the sufferings of this lovely slave; nor can I, will I, ought I to see him languish under miseries, to which I am certain he is a stranger, and cannot long support. She had no sooner formed this resolution, than she wrote the billet, and plucking a diamond off her breast, and folding it in it, that she might be able to hurl it at a greater distance than the paper of itself might have fallen, we saw it light directly at your feet; at which we shut the window immediately, lest, in the hurry of surprize and joy, you might have approached more near than was convenient, where there are so many spies and guards perpetually attending. This is the intelligence I bring you, sir, pursued she, which if you receive not with the extremest pleasure, you are not only ungrateful, but also preverfe; blind to your own interest, and deserving of the misfortunes you have already fallen under, and those which may ensue from slighted love and tenderness abus'd. Mon-

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trano assured me, in relating this part of his story, that he never in his whole life had been capable of feeling so much scorn and detestation as at that minute, the name of wife to the Incas could not inspire him with such respect, as to take off his contempt for that of a transported felon, in which circumstance he found this queen had been brought to Ceylon; he had his heart already too much devoted to his beloved Iseria, for any other charms to work the least effect. Those of this queen, tho' she had been the greatest beauty nature ever found, would not have been able to have compensated for the deformities of her mind. Scarce could he regard the old beldame, who came from her with patience; he had, however, presence enough of mind to reflect on the danger of disobliging her, but never, said he, did I go through a greater or more difficult task, than that of affecting a satisfaction at the news she brought; he did it, notwithstanding his reluctance in such a manner as passed for truth, and the amorous Elphania, not doubting by what her confederate informed her, but that he was as susceptible of her favours as she wished him, prevailed on her doating husband to give her leave to retire to a little palace they had farther in the heart of the country; she pretended that the air had been prejudicial to her health, and for the recovery of it, he willingly consented she should be for a little time removed. She had the liberty

liberty of chusing what slaves she pleased to attend her, and Montrano, for whose sake all this was done, was the first singled out; as for the rest, they were either such whose fidelity she could depend on, or such who had not capacities to fathom the meaning of any thing, which was not directly told them: with this equipage she took leave of the Incas, and being arrived at the place to which she intended to go, the slaves were appointed each to their several employments; that of Montrano's was to overlook those that kept the rooms in order, and see that they did their duty; an easy task as to the bodily exercise of it, but his mind was in agitations more violent than even; the humour of the mistress he now served, was more perplexing to him than the tyranny of his former masters; nor had he less to expect from her revenge, when she should find how little he was disposed to comply with her intentions, than from the most inhuman of his own sex. She presented herself to him, her natural beauties illustrated with all the aids and embellishments of art; she talked to him in so free a manner, that had he not been apprized of her desires by the discourse of her confident, yet he could not have been ignorant what they were, by her behaviour; but thinking the safest, as well as most gallant manner of denying, was, not to seem to know that any thing more was expected from him, than submission and respect, he never approached her but with  
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the same awe as that we enter the sacred temples; but as this was not that sort of adoration which she expected from him, she grew extremely peevish, and after she had dismissed him from her presence, complained to her confidant of the little compliance she found in him, on which the shameless procurer of her pleasures took upon her to chide him severely; but, while she was doing so, a sudden thought came into his head, which might gain him some time: he told her, that no man could be more sensible of the beauties of her mistress, but that he was under a solemn vow not to know the joys of love for two whole years. More than one of them, said he, is already elapsed, and as I have kept my promise inviolable till now, have cause to fear, that, if I break it, some sudden and unheard-of judgment will fall upon me. This monster of her sex endeavoured, partly by railing at his superstitious regard of oaths, as she termed it, and partly by hinting, that no punishment could ensue the breach of it, equal to that which threatened him in losing the favour of the queen; but neither persuasions nor menaces being of any use to alter his determination, she was obliged to leave him as she found him, and return to her mistress with an account little pleasing to her. What discourse passed between them was unknown as to the subject of it, but he doubted not, by the gloom which sat next day upon both their brows, that it had not been in his favour,



favour, and that he should shortly experience all that a cruel and revengeful woman, restrained by no principles of honour, religion, or generosity, could inflict; but, contrary to these suggestions, the intelligencer of the other's meaning told him, that in spite of the coldness with which he had received her queen's affections, and the disregard he paid her, in preferring a foolish vow to her embraces, she still retained a tenderness for him, which would not suffer her to cast him off, and had prevailed on her to wait the expiration of the time he mentioned, for a proof how worthy he was of the passion she had entertained for him. Montrano, said he, answered this message in terms as obliging as he could, and from that time forward was put to no further trouble till the expiration of the year. They soon removed to the great palace, where the deceived Incas received this perjured woman with such demonstrations of kindness, that the knowledge of her ingratitude to such a husband, whose love had raised her from the lowest ebb of fortune, and still continued to support her in all the pomp that that part of the world could afford, made her yet more hateful in his mind; he often told me, that he abhorred even to look upon her. But not to spin out my narration to a tedious length, the whole year of his freedom from her solicitations, he past in contrivances to get from that detested place; but finding that impossible, since, had he made his escape to

any of the other islands, as perhaps he might have done in a canoe, the Maldives have so good an intelligence with each other, that he must infallibly have been discovered, and sent back to endure the most cruel punishments imaginable. You may think it strange perhaps that neither he nor I could have any opportunity of sending to Ceylon, where we both were known, and might early have been ransomed; but the temper of those wretches is so barbarous, that, besides the use a christian slave is to them, they take delight in triumphing over and detaining them, and having no correspondence with any other nation in the world, they know not the value of their own commodities; and having every thing within themselves, which they are capable of having any relish for, regard nothing which may be offered in exchange for their slaves: gold nor silver is of any estimation with them, their current coin being a white shell which is found upon the mountains, and which the Incas keeps a guard about, it being death by the law for any person, but those appointed by him, to pick up any of it. For these reasons they have, on the frontiers of the island next to Ceylon, a constant number of troops always maintained, who suffer no boat nor person to pass either to or from that place, without a token from the Incas; for that being a place of trade, and having a factory in it of christians, without this caution it would be impossible to keep those people,

people, who are so miserable as to fall into their hands, from regaining their liberty. Montrano therefore having no way to fly from solicitations so displeasing to him, to evade them, pretended sickness: a few days before the expiration of the year, he counterfeited so well the most violent pains, that none who saw him, but verily believed he languished under them; one thing, indeed, was a great advantage to his feigning, which was, that there were no physicians in that place, their way of curing diseases being to shoot arrows into many parts of the patient's body, believing phlebotomy a remedy for all disorders. Montrano suffered this experiment to be tried on him, but afterward pretended to be much worse than before. In fine, he carried on this deception for the space of seven months, at the end of which time he had an unexpected relief; Elphania fell in reality as sick as he pretended to be, her life was despaired of; and having before made an excuse, that the sea air did not agree with her constitution, the Incas would needs have it, that her present disorder sprung from the same occasion, and ordered her to be removed on a litter borne on six mens shoulders, thinking that the easiest way of carriage. Montrano seeming not yet perfectly recovered, was dispensed with for not officiating in his employment; but obliging soon after to pretend a relapse, for being, on the queen's being somewhat

somewhat better, sent for to come to the place where she was, and thinking this would not be a lasting pretence, he feigned madness, and committed a thousand irregularities, tho' none hurtful or mischievous to any body: Elphania, as well as others, was deceived for a long time; but, at length, discovered the imposition by the same means she had done he was an Italian; his misfortunes growing, by their continuance and little appearance or hope of relief, more heavy to be borne, he could not forbear giving them vent in tears and exclamations whenever he was alone: he was one day overheard by the confidants of Euphania's desires, and the report that he was but seemingly mad immediately conveyed to her mistress, on which she resolved no longer to be disappointed in her love, or failing in that of her revenge, for the contempt thrown on her beauty. She again desired leave of the Incas to retire into the country, which being easily obtained, among the number of slaves she took with her, was Montrano, *the antick postures of that poor lunatick*, said she, *may divert in the absence of my dear lord*. Nobody in the least suspecting her intentions, whatever she did in those affairs were unquestioned. It was now three full years Montrano had carried on his disguise of madness without any person in the world believing him otherwise; nor had he any thought that Elphania had discovered the deceit, till they



they arrived at the little palace which she had made choice of for the scene of her pleasures or revenge ; but she was no sooner settled there, than sending for him into her own apartment, where nobody but the old Venetian woman was present, she began to question him, for what reason he had imposed on a queen who loved him ; the knowledge that he was suspected did not surprize him so far, but that he had presence of mind enough to endeavour to wave it off, by replying in the same wild and incoherent manner, as he had done since he first affected to be frantick ; but she would not suffer him to go on for any long time ; but telling him, she was convinced of the imposition he had so unworthily put on her, and that if he did not immediately confess the true motive which obliged him to it, he should suffer the most cruel death she could possibly invent. He paused a little on these words ; not, as he said, that he feared to die, but thought, that to die in this remote corner of the world, without the power of acquainting any person with his fate, was something too terrible to be borne ; and thinking, that as she was so positive, no worse could befall him in a declaration of the truth, than in a fruitless endeavour to conceal it : he threw himself upon his knees, acknowledged her beauties to be infinite, returned his most humble thanks for the condescensions she had made him ; but withall confessed, that he was rendered

dered wholly unable to return her affections, by having, before he saw her, devoted his whole soul to another object; and then proceeded to relate to her the history of his love for you, his marriage, and the cruelty of his uncle; who, separating him from you, had occasioned his falling into the condition of a slave. He told her, he relied entirely on her generosity; and entreated, she would look on him with the eyes of pity and forgiveness.

When Montrano related this part of his history to me, said his friend, he told me, I must make use of my own imagination to conceive, what kind of fury it was that seized the soul of this most vile woman, and sparkled in her eyes. You, madam, pursued he to me, if your soft soul can form an idea so horrible, must tell yourself what was not in his power, who saw it, to describe, much less in mine. What, cried she, is it for another that I am despised? Is it for the idea of an absent woman, the beauties of the present are contemned? The bursting rage prevented her from speaking any farther to him at that time; but turning to the advising fiend, who stood near her, they had some discourse together; after which, in a loud voice, it shall be so, said she, since he is no man for me, he shall not for another. With these words she flew out of the room, leaving only the old wretch with him, who bidding him follow her, conducted him to a room at the farther end of the

the palace, where having locked him in, she left him for some hours to meditate on what had happened; but towards evening, coming in again, Well, said she, have you considered of your late folly, in the manner you ought to do? Have you repented? And are you now resolved to accept that happiness the queen designs you? I have already told her, answered he, that it is not in my power. But have you reflected, resumed she, that your life is wholly in hers? And that with a breath she can dispose your fate? I have, said he, and whatever miseries heaven may make her the instrument of inflicting on me, I must endure. It is well, ungrateful wretch, cried she, but she has more of mercy than thou meritest from her: your life she will not take; but as you slight the joys of love, when profered you by her, she will take effectual care you never shall taste them with another. Montrano protested to me, that he could not guess what it was she meant, till giving a stamp with her foot, six lusty slaves rushed in, and, in spite of his struggling, bound his hands and feet with great cords: the beldame saw it done; and asking him, once more, if he repented, to which he answered in the negative, she went out of the room, and bade the fellows do their office: on which one of them plucked out a sharp instrument, drew nearer to him, and by some actions discovered to the amazed prisoner his inhuman intent. For, madam, now, continued he,  
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comes on the dreadful part of your unhappy husband's fate. Husband, did I say? Alas! he, from that cruel moment, had no more the power of being so; deprived for ever of the dear names of father and of husband; robbed of his sex, and doomed to an eternal sterility.

Here, my dear Miramillia, said Iseria, not all the resolution I had been mustering up for some moments (for from the first mention of that wicked queen's menaces, I was more apprehensive than Montrano had been, and guessed the horrid meaning of her soul) all, I say, could not enable me to bear the recital of it, without giving a great shriek at the thoughts how much he must have endured in so unexampled a barbarity; but ashamed of the concern I had expressed, since he was now perfectly recovered. I endeavoured to excuse it as well as possible, but he seem'd not to wonder at my confusion, and prosecuted his narration in these terms.

Something being applied to stop the blood, and a person employed to take care of the wound, of the best understanding in that country, he was in a little time past danger. Elphania, either repenting what she had done, or that it were true as she said, that she had given orders only to threaten, not really to inflict such a misfortune; to make what reparation was in her power, gave him his liberty, and a large sum of money, that he might transport himself to Ceylon. In

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spight of the just hatred Montrano had conceived against her, the circumstances he was in, made him accept of her favours, and hiring a canoo, embarked in it for Candea, the chief city of Ceylon; but the weather changing, they were obliged to land him among the mountains, fifty miles short of the port he desired: the necessity, however, being unavoidable, he was forced to comply. He found some poor Dutch on the sea-coast, one of whom he took with him as a guide; but they had not travelled many miles before they were met by a gang of robbers, with whom making some resistance, he was dangerously wounded, after being deprived of all that had been given him by Elphania. The poor guide continued by him till some passengers coming by, he was taken up and carried to a house; where being taken some care of, and his wounds dressed, tho' after a very indifferent manner, the strength of his constitution at last brought him to himself; but the only Christians in that place being Dutch, a people who never were greatly famed for hospitality or charity, so little was contributed towards his support, that the want of necessaries kept him weak much longer than the hurts he got by the thieves would else have done. In time, he recovered, but had not strength enough, for a long time, even to walk about his chamber, 'till that small pittance, which had been allowed him, being taken away, and the appetites of nature craving support, he

he crawled out into the street; an object, he said, of so much pity, that he appeared more like a ghost than a living man. Having been so long kept from air, coming into it all at once, made him faint away, and he fell down at the door of a rich native of the isle; as it happened, he had less of the savage in him than most of them, and could not see a creature of his own specie in so lamentable a condition, without affording him some relief; he took him in, had him laid on a bed; applied proper things for his recovery, and after gave him the best refreshment he had in the house; neither of them knew the language of the other, but the Ceyloneze made him understand by signs, that if he would serve him, he would be kind to him; but Montrano, as well as he could, let him know he was a passenger, who had been deprived of all he had of value by the robbers; and that he was travelling to Candea, where he had friends who would support him, but that he must beg his way thither. The other shook his head at this information, in token that his countrymen had little charity to strangers; but Montrano being determined, he gave him some small matter toward his support in the journey; with which, after having stayed three or four days to recover his strength, he departed. But, alas! his long indisposition and want had enfeebled his limbs in such a manner, that he rather crept than walk'd; he mov'd on, however, in

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this slow pace for a whole week, half a mile a day being the most he could boast to have travelled; at the end of which time, he unfortunately mistook his way, and happened into a wild place, which they call the deserts of Cayamas; there did he wander up and down, unable to extricate himself from that labyrinth of rocks, which lie thick scattered in that dreadful waste; and must certainly have perished, had not providence sent him a relief by the most unexpected means. A gang of robbers having taken a rich booty, for which, in all probability, they were pursued, had taken shelter in this place, where it was almost impossible for any to overtake or find them. Thinking themselves secure, they had sat down to rest and divide the prize, at the foot of a great heap of stones, which seemed as if they had been thrown up by some earthquake. When Montrano came on the other side, he heard their voices; and said, he thought he never had heard a sound so pleasing as this was; which gave him intelligence, he should once more see the faces of human creatures, and he hoped be guided from that uninhabited wild. The pile, which parted them, was vastly long, but not very high, and they happened to lie so on the side he was, that he might easily climb to the top of it; in spite of his weakness, therefore, he attempted it, and with such success, that in a few minutes he gained the summit, whence looking down, he saw five men sitting pretty close

close together, counting money, which lay in a heap on the ground before them; he was considering in what manner he should get down the ridge of stones, being much more perpendicular on this side than the other, when one of the robbers, happening to cast up his eyes, saw him; the wildness of the place, his pale and ghastly looks, the guilt of the gazer, every thing conspired to terrify; and concluding him to be the ghost of some person he had murdered, gave a great shriek, and presently fell down in a swoon; his companions believing him struck with sudden death, started from their seats, and had all of them, at the same time, a sight of this affrighting object; every one took immediately to his heels, without any regard, either of the booty for which they had ventured their lives, nor what became of him they left behind; and the natives of this country being extreme swift runners, they were out of sight in a moment. Montrano guessed what occasioned their terror, and cried out to them to stay; but fear had either made them deaf, or not understanding what he said, took it for something contrary to what it was. In spite of the numberless miseries of his present condition, he has often told me, he could not forbear smiling at their flight, and falling into some reflections, how inseparable, thought he, are cowardice and villainy. The place and circumstance he was in, however, giving him little opportunity for indulging them, he de-



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ferred it 'till another time, and made what haste he could to descend, which, when he had done, he was in some debate within himself, if he should take the money, so convenient for him in his necessity, and leave the wretch, who had assisted in the unlawful gaining it, to recover as he could; or if he should endeavour to bring him to himself, and by that act of charity engage him to be his guide out of the desert; the latter of these suggestions took place, not only because he had already experienced how difficult it was for him to find his way of himself, but also that it was agreeable to the sweetness of his disposition. Determined to do this, he knelt down by him, rubbed his breast and temples, bent him forward, and did every thing in his power to restore him to his senses; which when he had done, by signs and some few words which he had learned of the Ceyloneze language, he made him at last convinced, that he was no more than a man, and had no design to hurt him. The fellow, thus re-assured, looked about for his companions, and finding they were gone, began to scramble up what they had left behind. Montrano assisted him in gathering it, and by beseeching postures, and such expressions as he could make intelligible, entreated he would conduct him from that desert, which the other promised to do; but by going round about, for fear his companions, when they had considered on the matter, should return and claim their share

share of the treasure, they were two days before they gained the road, but rejoiced was Montrano once more to see it; at parting, the thief seeing the miserable condition he was in, gave him somewhat to help him on his journey, and on he travelled till he came to a little town, called Javira; there I had the good fortune to renew my acquaintance with him, I having procured my liberty, by having served the sovereign of the Maldives in an exigence, which, but for me, had cost him his life. I was taking some refreshment at a house of entertainment, such a wretched one as that place affords, when I saw a person featured like Montrano, but in such an abject and deplorable condition, and so altered in every thing, from what he was, that I could not believe the first dictates of my mind, which told me, it was no other; yet resolving to be convinced, I drew nearer to him, as he was asking charity of the landlord of the house. He saw me not 'till then, but as soon as he did, Alceſtus! ſaid he. I will not go about, madam, continued this obliging friend, to represent the ſatisfaction I conceived at meeting with him; which would, indeed, have been as great a grief, had I not, at that time, been maſter of ſufficient courage, to eaſe thoſe calamities which were viſible to me: the others which were not, and which, as ſoon as we were alone, he informed me of, gave me a concern equal to my ſurprize, that any thing, which had the ſhape of a woman, could

act in so abhorred and shameless a manner, as Elphania and her confidant had done; but as there was no relief for a misfortune, such as that, but patiently enduring it, I omitted nothing in my power which might console him. We made the best of our way toward Ceylon, which at last we reach'd; I had the good fortune to execute my father's commands, on the villain who had endeavour'd to impose upon him; and Montrano found the merchant to whom he had been sent by his uncle, and received from him this pleasing intelligence, that the old gentleman repenting what he had done, had writ letters to recall him; and when the answers had let him know, he had not yet arrived on that coast, had sent others full of grief, and entreating he would make all imaginable search for him. Neither of us, therefore, having any longer business at Ceylon, we resolv'd to leave it the first opportunity, but were oblig'd to wait near two years before any ship set sail for Europe, and when after that time we embarked, it was in a Dutch merchant-man, bound for Rotterdam; there were we also compell'd to stay a considerable time before any ship offer'd for Venice; but at length meeting with one, we came together without any farther difficulties, and landed late last night; he has not yet paid his duty to his uncle, nor would suffer me to see my father, the tenderness he had for you calling him first here, where he said I must also accompany him; not being able, he said, to re-  
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late to you himself the misfortune which you now are acquainted with from my mouth.

Thus, said Iseria, did the generous Clitophon end his melancholy narration, which having thanked him for, we went together to the garden, to see what was become of Montrano, whom we found lying in this very grove, in so sad and melancholy a posture, as must have moved any one to pity, much more a wife, who loved him more than all things on this side heaven; and whose affections was not in the least abated by the knowledge of the injury that had been done him. I entreated him to rise, but he refusing to do so, saying, the earth, darkness, and solitude, were fit for such a wretch as he was; I threw myself down by him, protesting that I would never leave him; that the place should always be mine; and that if he did not wish to see me the most unhappy woman in the world, he must throw off all thoughts, and forgetful of past misfortunes, join me in thanks to the almighty disposer of all blessings, that he was at last past over them, and safe in his Iseria's arms, as he should ever be in her heart. As I was speaking in this manner, Oh thou most excellent of all thy sex, interrupted he, think not I come to claim thee as a wife, to curse thy youth and beauty with the shadow of a husband. No, 'twould be a sin, heaven could never pardon, should I condemn thy charms to cold sterility: Thou, who may'st bless the world with a race of angels like thyself.



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self. No, my Iseria, I came but to see thee once, then take my everlasting leave, and in some distant cloyster hide me for ever from thy sight. Unkind Montrano, answered I, think you my love was sensual? Are you not as dear as ever? And would you leave me, leave me by your own choice? Have I not endured enough, when torn from me by an inhuman uncle? I wasted seven whole years in grief, but you must now inflict a second wretchedness more dreadful than the first: that, that, was unavoidable, but this free-will, and want of love to me, or want of mine to you. But do not think that I will suffer it; no, continued I, embracing him, thus will I cling about you ever, nor shall you throw me off; through lands and seas will I accompany you, and wheresoever you go, Iseria will be there; I am your wife, your lawful wedded wife, and will maintain my claim against the united force of the whole world. Many more expressions, of the same nature with these, did I make use of, to convince him, that I regarded him with the same tenderness as ever, and thought no misfortune equal to that of being separated from him; but could not prevail on him to alleviate his sorrows for a considerable time. Never was there a scene more moving, more truly touching to the soul, nor never conflict more equally carried on by both; fondness with fondness warred, and love was opposed against love; mine at last, however, gained the victory, and he

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consented to live with me in the manner you see ; we pass our days in a mutual endeavour to oblige each other, and our nights in such endearments as a chaste brother might allow himself with a sister he tenderly loved. Our misfortune is entirely concealed from all the world but Clitophon and yourself, on whose discretion I dare rely, else had not made you partake of the secret. I believe no woman could be more tranquil, in such a circumstance, than myself ; yet, Miramillia, loving to that height of passion as I do, and belov'd with the same ardour, judge, if I can bring my wishes to that pitch of resignation and content, that is necessary to qualify me for the task you would have me undertake.

The afflicted mother sighed at the little success she had hitherto met with, and after having thank'd Iseria for the good opinion she had of her secrecy, took her leave, and departed with a heavy heart. The next it came in her head to address, on this score, was a lady lately married to a gentleman of equal years and fortune, and one who appeared to have the extreme tenderness for her ; in no visible circumstance of this new wedded pair, was there room for discontent ; she made no doubt, therefore, but that she should here find what she had been disappointed of in Anziana and Iseria, and went immediately on the proof.

Celestina, so was she called, received her with the most perfect complaisance ; and because her house was at too great a distance

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from that of Miramillia's, for that lady to return the same day she came, a magnificent apartment was allotted for her; they pass the remainder of the day in feasting, and the evening was concluded with an entertainment of musick and dancing; but Miramillia, who was little capable of relishing these diversions, longed for an opportunity of discoursing her alone, which, early the next morning, presented itself to her; she coming, of her own accord, into her chamber, to give her the good-morrow, and enquire how she had rested: which compliment being answered in the manner it required, the grieved mother related her unhappy story, and made known her request; at which Cefesino started, and made no reply for the space of two or three minutes, but, at length, recovering herself from the surprize she had been in, endeavoured, like Anziana, to put her off giving credit to such sort of people as fortune-tellers; but the other continuing to urge her to make the experiment at least, she had too much good nature to refuse, without having given her a sufficient cause for it; and again, pausing before she spoke, as if to consider in what manner she should answer: I have been in a little contest within myself, said she, whether I should, by revealing to you a secret, which I take so much pains to conceal from the whole world, give you a demonstration, that what you ask is not in my *power* to grant; or, by making

ing some slight excuse, leave you at liberty to think I want the *will*; but your quality, good sense, and the pity I have for your misfortunes, make the former of these suggestions of the most force with me. I will, pursued she, put an entire confidence in you; and, perhaps, surprize you with as odd a story as you have ever heard. There needed no more to convince Miramillia, she was also here mistaken in her hope; however, she prepared herself to hear what the other was about to say, who, having made fast the door, sat down on the bed-side, and began the narrative she had promised in these words.



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*The History of CELESINO, Signior MARRAMONT, and PHILETTA.*

**Y**OU know, said she, that by a former husband I had a daughter, named Philetta, of whom I was so extremely tender, that I resolved never to marry, though being left a widow at the age of seventeen, with a vast fortune in my own hands, and some share of beauty. I had numbers who addressed me, but I persisted in my resolution, 'till my ill genius brought me acquainted with Marramont. He no sooner saw me, than he seemed seized with the most violent passion that ever possessed the heart of man. I was then but thirty; and the world said, had charms sufficient to countenance his tender folly. He wrote to me, addressed all the friends I had in the world to befriend his suit. In fine, he counterfeited the dying lover to such an admiration, that what betwixt pity for his imagined sufferings, the daily solicitations of every body about me, who thought the match rather an advantage to me than the contrary; and though I blush, and must for ever blush to say it, a secret liking of his person, I at last yielded to be his wife. The wedding-

wedding-day was set, and every thing preparing for our nuptials; but the new tenderness I had conceived for him, took not away any part of that with which I had regarded Philetta; and she being then at the house of a sister I had in the country, I sent for her, in order to have new cloaths and jewels made for her, that she might appear with the greater splendor at the ceremony; but she came not, neither did I receive any letter from her to excuse her absence: so strange a neglect of duty from a young girl, whom I had bred up in the strictest principles of obedience, gave me a surprize equal to my displeasure. I imagined it to be, that she feared I had consulted more my own satisfaction than her interest in this marriage; and as such a supposition would have been a vast deal of injustice to me, who had settled her a fortune, entirely independent, before I would consent to be the wife of Marramont, I conceived the greater indignity at it. In fine, she came not, nor did I hear any thing from her till two days after the ceremony of our marriage, when I received a letter, the contents whereof were these.

To

*"To my dear honoured Mother.*

*"Madam,*

"IF astonishment ever had the power to  
 "I turn a heart to stone, mine sure, at  
 "hearing you intended to be the wife of  
 "Marramont, had ceased to tremble with  
 "horror, as it now does, but even to think  
 "that such a thing is in agitation. A fall I  
 "got from my horse some days ago, by which  
 "I broke my arm, and received several bruises,  
 "renders me unable to wait on you with the  
 "reasons for my aversion to this match; and  
 "they are of such a nature, that I cannot,  
 "dare not commit them to paper; all that I  
 "beg in that, for the sake of mine and your  
 "own eternal peace, you will delay the  
 "dreadful nuptials till I see you. Be assured,  
 "dear mother, I am too well acquainted  
 "with my duty, to presume to advise where  
 "obedience only and submission is my province,  
 "were it not in a case where silence  
 "were unpardonable, and instead of blessings  
 "entail on me hereafter your eternal curse.  
 "Oh therefore, for ever honoured Celestina,  
 "best of parents, forgive and pity your unhappy  
 "child, and put off all thoughts of  
 "Marramont till you shall know why he,  
 "of all mankind, ought not, must not, cannot  
 "be your husband. Terrible idea! It  
 "shakes my very soul; I am torn with agonies

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"nies unsupportable, and scarce have the  
 "power to subscribe myself in the manner  
 "I ought to do, to so tender a mother,

"Madam,

"Your most obedient,

"tho' afflicted daughter,

"PHILETTA."

You must believe, continued Celestina, that such a letter must fill me with the extremest surprize; and what added very much to it was, that since she professed so violent an aversion to my marriage, and said she had such reasons to alledge against it, she did not acquaint me with it sooner; but I was soon eased of this part of my astonishment by the messenger who brought the letter; informing me, that he was set on by robbers in his way, who had very much wounded him, and rendered him for many days incapable of prosecuting his journey; and that the misfortune happening to him near a little village where there was no post, he had not a convenience of sending it by any other hand. I was also in a prodigious dilemma, if I should impart the contents of this billet to Marramont or not; but not being able to imagine she had any reasons, in reality, but that I have already named, I thought it would make him look on  
 her



her as a person too self-interested, and occasion a disgust which might never be worn off; I therefore resolved to say nothing of it. I continued, however, in great perplexities till I was eased of them (if I may call it so) to be involved in others of a more distracting nature, by the arrival of Philetta, which happened the very next day after I had received her letter. Unhappy girl, perceiving that she recovered not so speedily as she had hop'd, and dreading my perseverance in my design of marrying Marramont, because she heard nothing from me to the contrary, she made herself be brought to town in a litter. Our wedding, as you see, being kept extremely publick, the concourse of people which she saw about the gates, and the sound of the rejoicings within, made her immediately guess the truth; but being, as soon as she alighted, confirmed of what she feared, by the first servant she accosted; Then I am come too late, cried she, and with those words fell down in a swoon. Some ran to acquaint me with her arrival and condition, while others endeavour'd to bring her to herself. The ball was just begun, and we were in the middle of a dance, but the news put a stop to the mufick: I ran like one distracted, strangely divided between grief and wonder; and you may believe, that Marramont, in respect to me, stay'd not behind me; all the company followed. Poor Philetta, just as I took her in my arms, lifted up her eyes, but seeing Marramont

Marramont at the same time, turned them away with all the tokens of horror and detestation; then making her utmost efforts to throw herself on her knees: Madam, said she to me, I conjure you, by all the tenderness you have formerly professed for me, to suffer me to depart; the disorder I am in, will but occasion an interruption of your happiness, and the sight of it render me more wretched. Struck, as I was, with something more terrible than words can find a name for, it damped not my indignation at her imprudence; whatever were her griefs, I thought she ought to have restrained them before so much company; and as I could foresee nothing which could give a reasonable countenance to them, I resolved to let her know hereafter, how much I resented such a Behaviour. No, answered I, I shall not permit you to leave me, till I know what has induced you to act, in a manner so unbecoming the character you bear, and the obedience you owe me. I spoke no more to her at that time, but turning to my women, ordered them to see her to her chamber; and begging pardon of the company, returned with them to the ball; desiring every body to resume that gaiety, which the perverseness, as I then thought it, of Philetta had disturbed. But, in spite of my endeavours to prevent the vexation I was in from being taken notice of, I could not so far disguise it, but that the whole assembly perceived it;

it; and thinking, as indeed it was, the pains I took to conceal my inquietudes an addition to them, took their leave much sooner than otherwise they would have done; nor was it in the power, either of Marramont or myself, to detain them. But that gentleman had been in too much disorder himself, from the time of Philetta's coming, to be able to say much in the excuse of mine. Never was confusion more lively painted than in his face; perplexed, as my own mind was, I saw the disorders of his; but believing they were caused by the aversion my daughter had expressed at seeing him my husband, I was not surprized at it. The company departed; I flew to the chamber of Philetta, where having acquainted her with the care I had taken of settling her fortune, before I gave myself away in marriage, I began to express my resentment at that want of faith she testified to have, in the repeated professions I had made her, that I would never do any thing prejudicial to her interest; but she put a stop to what I was about to say, by these words: Oh interpret not, madam, said she, with a voice interrupted with sighs, the griefs you see me in, to a cause so unworthy of my soul! Had you abandoned me, thrown me off for ever; turned me out a beggar, to seek all day precarious sustenance at proud men's doors, I could have slept all night contented in my hovel, nor known these racks of thought.

thought. Cold, hunger, scorn, all the numberless ills which wait on poverty, I could have borne with patience, nay, death itself, rather than have lived in hated greatness, and see you, as I do, the wife of Marramont.

How impossible is it for me, my dear Miramillia, pursued Celestina, to represent, as it deserves, what 'twas I felt at hearing her speak in this manner; if I had not known that she had been a long time out of town, and that Marramont had always lived in it; and that till after her departure he had been wholly unacquainted in our family, I should have imagined, that he had made professions of passion to her; that they had taken an impression on her; and that nothing but to be deprived of the man she loved by her mother, could have thrown her into the despair I saw her in; but such a suggestion appearing to have no ground, because I had bred her with that caution, scarce ever suffering her to be out of my sight while she continued in town, that I was certain she could have no opportunity of listening to any declarations of that nature; I knew not what to think, but not able to remain in a suspense so painful, I commanded her to relate me the truth without reserve, of all the reasons she had to alledge against my marriage; and in particular, all she had heard or knew concerning Marramont. A flood of tears were the only reply I could get from her for a long time to



to this interrogatory; but when, with much difficulty, she regained the use of speech, she employed it in terms like these: Madam, said she, whatever are my thoughts, it is now too late to reveal them; the irrevocable knot is ty'd, the discovery I had to make, might have prevented Marramont from obtaining the title he now enjoys, but cannot take it from him; permit me, therefore, to pass my life in some remote retirement, where I may never see, nor hear any thing of a union so destructive to my peace; and for the sake of your own desire no more to know, what, if revealed, must plunge you in eternal discontent, and woes little inferior to those which rend my soul. You must believe such answers were far from diminishing my resolution of being satisfied, and I insisted on being informed, with all the earnestness I was capable of expressing; but all I could say being in vain, all that can be conceived of indignation was short of what I felt; and perceiving that neither threatnings nor persuasions would avail, I left her with the severest curse my rage could invent on her disobedience. At my return to the room where I had left Marramont, I found him in a posture of the utmost discontent: as soon as he saw me enter, he rose from his chair, with all the marks imaginable of horror and anguish in his countenance; and looking wildly in my face, Well, madam, said he, what has Philetta declared? Are we to part? Speak, I beseech you, and suffer me to linger in

in an uncertainty more severe than death itself could be. No, Marramont, answered I, it is I alone am doomed to endure the racks of doubt, for sure you are but too guilty of some secret crime which Philetta knows, but will not utter, but what her want of duty makes her refuse to reveal; let me obtain from your affection, be your guilt of the blackest and most detested kind, I swear by heaven, never to upbraid you with it, if from yourself I know it. If therefore, continued I, there is ought in your whole life unworthy the character of a man of honour, as I much fear there is, confess it now, and merit pardon. Here I ceas'd, expecting his reply; but instead of giving me one, he remained in a fixed posture, his eyes cast down, his brows bent, and all the symptoms of deep-revolving thought. 'Tis certain, indeed, that many and various emotions were then at war within him; and that the reason of his silence was, that he could not determine in what manner it was best for him to answer. I stood looking on him for some moments, without reiterating my adjurations, and the more I observed him, the more methought I saw the marks of guilt upon him, but of what kind I was far from being able to form any just conjecture; at last, impatient to solve the enigma, I again renewed my request, that if conscious of any thing which had rendered him unworthy of the title of husband, or that could give any excuse to the aversion Philetta had

had exprest to see him, as such, he would reveal it, more than once repeating the vow I before had made, never to reproach him with it. At these words, looking in my face with more assurance than he had done before, I know of nothing I have done, said he, which should subject me to the anger of Celestina, and if I have offended Philetta, it must be wholly a sin of ignorance. Can this be true? resumed I. Nothing can be more so, replied he; and to confirm you that it is, I swear by all hopes of happiness here and hereafter, that never did I knowingly do any thing which should incur the displeasure of Celestina or Philetta. Then sure, cried I, some fury has possess the mind of that unhappy girl, and it is to physick, not reproofs, we must have recourse for the cure of her disease. We had some farther discourse, much to the same purpose; he by repeated oaths convincing me that there was nothing in reality to accuse him of, I began in good earnest to think her brain was disordered, and went to bed with a resolution of sending the next morning for a physician—— But, alas! before I could do so, the fatal mystery was revealed, and I was near being indeed reduced to that condition I believed her in. Having something to say to Marramont, who having past the night in great inquietudes, was risen before me, and had retired himself to his closet; I went thither to him, finding the door locked, I peeped through the  
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key-hole, and saw him busily engaged in writing; as soon as I knocked, he put the paper hastily into his pocket, and opened the door. I took no notice of what I had observed, but having delivered what I had to say, left him to finish what he had been about: being seized, however, with an unhappy curiosity of discovering what he endeavoured to keep secret, I loitered about the gallery; having still an eye to his closet: in some little time after, I heard his bell ring, on which a servant coming, he ordered, that one who had attended him before his marriage with me, should be called; which command being obeyed, I saw the fellow go in, and immediately return with a letter in his hand, which as soon as he saw me he concealed in his sleeve. I said nothing, but turned from him as though I observed him not, with a design to call one of my people, to watch where he went, not doubting but he was going abroad, to carry that letter to some place where it was directed; but he saved me that trouble, for before I could speak to any body, I saw him turn the other way, and ran up a pair of stairs which led to Philetta's apartment: I had no thought, however, of his going into her chamber, and was still prosecuting my design of having him watched, till I heard him open her door, which, by reason of some fault in the lock, made a more than ordinary noise: judge the surprise I was

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in ; tho' I gave myself no time to deliberate, but flying up stairs, met the fellow coming down : as soon as I entered Philetta's room, I saw her with a letter in her hand, which snatching hastily from her, I found, to my unspeakable confusion, it contained these lines :

*“ To the much-injured PHILETTA,*

“ **T**IS needless to tell you how much I  
 “ repent the wrong I have done you, I  
 “ dare believe you are sufficiently convinced by  
 “ your own reason, that nothing can be more  
 “ dreadful to my remembrance—it was in-  
 “ deed a sin to treat you in the manner I did,  
 “ not knowing you to be Philetta ; but sure  
 “ that sin is doubly punished, in finding  
 “ you the daughter of Celestina——my very  
 “ soul is torn with agonies unutterable, I  
 “ pity you, and oh would to heaven it were  
 “ in my power to do more ; gladly would I  
 “ lay down my life, if by that sacrifice I  
 “ could call back time, and make the guilty  
 “ moment of your ruin to have never been ;  
 “ but as it cannot be, as the inquiry I have  
 “ done you is irreparable, and neither  
 “ prayers, nor sighs, nor tears, nor even the  
 “ death of the offender, can make you less  
 “ undone, expose not yourself to be revenged  
 “ on me ; as you have begun, continue to  
 “ conceal

“ conceal the woes you cannot remedy, and  
 “ remember that in disclosing them, you must  
 “ involve the best of mothers, the virtuous  
 “ Celestina, in the same horrors with her  
 “ husband,

“ The guilty, but

“ truly penitent

“ MARRAMONT.”

It is not in my power to tell you in what manner I was seized at reading this, a sudden mixture of rage, surprize, and grief, accompanied by a horror flowing from them all, overwhelmed my spirits, and I fell fainting on the floor, unable to utter one word; my women were immediately called to my assistance, who, with Philetta, in a short time recovered me. Marramont hearing I was in fits, notwithstanding the reluctance he had to appear before Philetta, came also up, whom I no sooner saw, than dismissing my attendants, Monster, cried I to him, canst thou behold the scene of ruin thou hast caused, and not run mad to think what extremities of punishments thy crime must have incurred from provoked heaven? Dost thou not tremble, wretch?—O in what hidden storehouse do the avenging thunders lie concealed? Are all the elemental fires extinguished, that thou with face erect standest here, living and regardless of the wrongs thou hast done?

Many more exclamations of the like nature broke from my tempestuous passions, by which, as well as by the sight of his own letter (which lay open on the table) he knew his crime was discovered, and remorse and shame at once assailing him, with agitations too violent to sustain, he drew his sword, and had that moment plunged it in his breast, had not the terror of murder, prevailing above all other considerations, made me fly to him and stop his hand——Forbear, cried I, nor send thyself so rashly into immediate perdition——Art thou a Christian, and darest thou have recourse to this heathenish remedy? These words (which as he has since confessed) he imputed more to my tenderness than religion, very much dissipated that despair, which before had taken possession of his soul, and with a countenance more enlivened, I am sensible enough, said he, that this is not the way to expiate my crime; but oh! how can I hope high heaven will forgive it, when Celestina, a woman, and my wife, refuses to do so?——Yet, continued he, when you shall know how little my cooler thoughts had to do in the crime I have acted, you will perhaps confess it not so enormous as at present it appears——even to Phileta's self I will appeal; hateful as I am to her, I dare depend upon her justice——By her I beg the mystery may be revealed, and because my presence is but with too much reason odious to her sight, I will withdraw, and leave

leave you to be informed, at full, of the sad truth. With these words he went out of the room, and I again commanded Philetta to relate the story, which, after having ushered in what she was about to say with a flood of tears, she began in this manner :

Since, madam, said she, the most shocking part of the affair is but too plainly revealed, I ought indeed, in justice to Marramont, to disclose the rest, and shew how far my own folly has provoked my ruin——O that it were no shame to you, I would proclaim it to the world, that so all unwary virgins might by my fate take warning, nor hazard fame and honour for the gratification of a childish humour ; but, madam, continued she, not to detain your attention by the fruitless reflections I have since made, a young lady in the neighbourhood where I was, happening to be at a window, saw at a distance some people making hay ; never did I perceive such symptoms of a perfect felicity as among them, they sat down when they seemed weary of labour, and drinking to each other out of a leather bottle, appeared so sociable and pleased with their condition, that we could not avoid taking notice of it, and falling into some discourse on the mistaken happiness which waits on grandeur, it came into our heads to experience what sort of contentments those were which are to be found in low life.——In pursuance of this innocent frolick, we dress our-



selves the next day in habits, such as the meanest sort of country-women wear; each had her rake, straw-hat, and little bag of provision by her side; thus accoutred, none questioned if we were real hay-makers or not, and we were employed as such; but when we were at work, by our awkwardness we were easily discovered to understand nothing of the matter; and the flouts we received on that account from those who were proficient, were pleasant enough, and afforded us a vast deal of diversion; as it did also to hear the conversation among themselves; which proves how great a delight variety affords, since for the sake of that, we could chuse an entertainment in itself so little worthy our regard, or had we been confined to bear, unsupportable to our enduring.—The day passed over, nor were we so weary of the amusement, but that we stayed till there were no other persons left in the field: when we perceived every body was gone, we began to think of returning home, but not apprehending any danger, moved but slowly on, sometimes singing, sometimes talking as we went, when all on a sudden we met a gentleman, well mounted, and attended by one servant; hearing our mirth, and taking us no doubt for what we seemed, he began to talk to us in a very free manner, which we answering, as we imagined the persons we represented would have done, he grew more bold, and spoke such things, as, had we appeared in our own shapes,

shapes, we must have highly resented; but as we were only laughed at, either not replying at all, or in such a way as made him think greater liberties might be taken without much offence, and being pretty warm with liquor, he jumped off his horse, and bidding his man take care of the other girl, caught me in his arms, and began to kiss and embrace me with so much vehemence, that I, who was far from suspecting any such matter, grew prodigiously alarmed—in fine, he bore me, in spite of all the resistance I could make, into a little thicket, at the farther end of the field, where, though I then conjured him to desist, told him I was a maid of quality, who, if he persisted in his rudeness, wanted not those who would revenge me on his presumption: he was deaf to my cries, and my entreaties, and too powerful for my strength, by force perpetrated all that can undo a virgin.—The fatal deed compleated, how vain was it for me to threaten or persuade; yet was I thundring out the former, and had doubtless said enough to make him know who I was, if his servant had not come, galloping on one horse and leading the other in his hand, to inform him, that the noise I and my companion had made, had reached the ears of some passengers, who had alarmed the country, and that it was best for him to get away with all speed; the advice was followed by my ravisher, he mounted, and I had no sooner lost sight of him, than I be-

held the young lady, who had been my partner in this wild frolick, come toward me, followed by a troop of rusticks; their coming, as she afterwards informed me, had obliged the fellow, who held her, to let her go, on which she conducted them in search of me. I presently asked, if she had received any ill usage from the man, but she denying that she had, I thought it would be improper to make her a confidant of what had happened to me, judging, that as the misfortune was not to be remedied, to expose it to the world would not take away, but add to the misery of my condition; but how much I suffered in my own mind, 'tis easy for you to judge, who have educated me in the strictest rudiments of virtue, and taught me to think only with shame and detestation on those guilty raptures to which, though unwillingly, I had been aiding. I kept my discontents, however, close veiled from the most prying observers, nor did any one so much as guess the ruin I had sustained by this unknown betrayer, as then he was; but long, alas! did he not continue so, a great horse-race happening to be in that part of the country, at which most of the nobility and gentry designing to be present, and had a person of my well known quality not been so, I thought it would appear too strange not to make people form conjectures of the cause, which though it was impossible the right should be hit upon, might have been no way to my advantage;

tage; in short, madam, I went, and almost the first object which presented itself to me, was my ravisher. Scarce could I keep myself from fainting at his sight, but recovering as well as I could from my surprise, curiosity and perhaps a mixture of something else, since extinguished, made me enquire his name, which the person whom I asked immediately told me was Marramont: I perceived he looked intently on my face, but whether he knew me for the country maid, or whether the difference of habit disguised me from his penetration, it must be from himself you must be informed, I am entirely ignorant, nor did I from that day ever see him, till I beheld him here, your husband; dreadful reflection! — But not to dwell upon it, in some months after I received your letter, summoning me to appear at the solemnity of your nuptials with this Marramont. Great God! was ever horror equal to what I felt, at news so astonishing, so distracting! I writ immediately those incoherent lines, which had they reached you in time, I know not but might have been forcible enough to have prevented an union so detestable to the laws of heaven and nature; but so it was decreed by fate and the ill genius of our family — 'tis done, nor can the mischief ever be repaired.

Thus, said Celestina, did the sorrowful Philletta finish the account of mine and her own misfortune; to which I answered but little: I neither could pity nor chide her, the folly



of her conduct deprived her of the one, and the misery to which it had reduced her, left me not the power to do the other ; I went from her into the chamber of Marramont, resolving to have the story also from his mouth, which I found agreed exactly with that she had told me ; he only adding, That having been at a horse-race, where getting the better of his antagonist, he had been obliged to treat half the country, and having drank too largely himself, was little capable of listening to the dictates of his reason, or of discovering whether Philetta was what she appeared to be by her habit, or not. He said also, that he had seen her at a second match of that nature, and though dressed and accompanied in a manner altogether different from that in which he met her before, yet he remembered enough of the lovely country girl, to know her in the fine lady ; but that though he enquired of several people who she was, he was not able to learn either her name, or family, and therefore could have no notion that she was my daughter. I was not insensible that he was so far innocent, yet was the shock too terrible to be sustained ; I fell into such violent convulsions, that my life was despaired of, and my brother, the abbot de Vermille, being sent for, it was to him I related the causes of the condition he found me in, and from him I had all the spiritual comfort which I could have expected from so near a relation, and so great a priest. He talked to

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Marramont, and found him so truly grieved, that he afforded him a share of his pity, equal to that he allowed me: after some time of consideration, he persuaded me to endeavour to forget, as much as possible, an evil which was without a remedy, and that since the crime of Marramont had been involuntary, and had since been expiated by severe penances, and a sincere contrition, I ought to pardon it, and live with him as my husband: as for Philetta, he resolved to take her under his care, and she being extremely satisfied with the proposal, was carried to a monastery, where she waits but till the time of probation is expired, to become a nun; and because it is absolutely necessary to keep domestick misfortunes from the knowledge of the world, and some busy people insinuating that my indisposition proceeded from some secret disgust to Marramont, it was thought proper by my brother, that on my recovery the marriage feastings and rejoicing should be revived; which advice being followed in the manner you see, I believe there now are none who imagine that either Marramont or myself repent the union we have made. But oh, Miramillia! pursued she, do you believe my heart has any share in the gaities of my behaviour? Must not the ruin of an only child, and the reflection that it is brought on her by the man whom I have made my husband, gnaw me with unceasing anguish? Are not the greatest enjoyments I have with him

curst?—Must not my soul be torn with the most poignant anguish?—Can I consider him as the undoer of Philetta without horror and detestation, and can I look on him as my husband without tenderness?—Alas! so perplexing is the circumstance, I dare neither say I love or hate him, and yet do both—am guilty alike to Marramont and Philetta.—Pity me, Miramilla, and if there be in nature the means of consolation, teach me to find it, else, shortly, wilt thou see thy wretched friend oppress'd and sunk beneath her weight of woe, to rise no more.

A flood of tears concluded this melancholy history, and Miramilla, indeed, instead of receiving comfort herself, was obliged to use her utmost endeavours to afford it to another. She stay'd some time with her, but her own sorrows reminding her, that to neglect the prosecution of her design was not the way to alleviate them, she took her leave, though with an infinite deal of regret on Celestina's side.

It was some time before she could think of a fourth person to whom she could apply with any likelihood of success; the knowledge of her goodnature and discretion having made her the confident of many secret woes which were unknown to the generality of the world; she was not therefore so easily deceived by appearances as other people sometimes are, and as she would not address to any one but where she had a good prospect of success, found  
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some difficulty in resolving where next she should have recourse; but running over in a moment the whole class of her acquaintance, she bethought herself of one who seemed to live in perfect contentment, though very much inferior in the goods of fortune, to those whom she already had made trial of— she therefore made no delay, but ordering her chariot to be got ready, went immediately to the house of Bellazara, for so this lady was called: at her arrival there she found every thing in its usual order, a little family well governed, every thing neat, and though no superfluity appeared, an handsome competency of all necessities might be seen throughout the whole house. Bellazara, and her husband Antonius, seemed to live together in so perfect a harmony, their wills, their desires, so much the same, as if one soul informed them both; so sweet a tenderness in their behaviour to each other, that this afflicted mother once more flattered herself that she was at the end of her search, and that in this middle state of life was to be found, what she had vainly sought among the great. She was not long before she communicated the intent of her visit, but had no sooner spoke it, than in the countenance of her fair friend, she read her disappointment—a gloomy pensiveness overspread that face, which was so lately covered with serenity, and a sad sigh proclaimed her contentment but dissembled. What! cried Miramillia, must I be still to seek? Has Bella-



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Bellazara too some secret woe, which hinders her from an ability to serve me?—Or do you feign a disquiet which you do not feel, to avoid relieving the real distresses of my afflicted soul? She uttered this with so much passion, that the other truly commiserating her condition, and at the same time reflecting on her own, the misfortunes of which were revived by this demand, burst into a flood of tears, which for some time left her not the liberty of speech; but when it was restored, Oh! Miramillia, said she, cease to accuse me of a disposition to which my nature is the most averse; heaven knows how great a pleasure it would be to me to give you comfort, with how much joy I would undertake the most difficult things for your satisfaction, much more so easy, so trifling a one as this.—There was a time, indeed, pursued she, weeping again, when I could have boasted a tranquillity of mind sufficient for your purpose, when all my thoughts were innocence and love, and peace and joy, but, oh! those golden days are fled for ever from me, guilt, shame, and horror, now make my troubled meditations—eternal tumults rage in my disordered breast, and I but wear a forced tranquillity without. The surprise which these words gave Miramillia was visible in all her air, she looked stedfastly on her, without being able to utter a word, but at last, weighing the meaning of what she had said, I am sorry, answered she, that I am mistaken in my opinion of your  
happi-

happinefs, but much more fo, that you have any reason to accufe yourfelf for not being fo. —I always thought the virtue of Bellazara would have defended her from any of thofe inward remorfes which feem to make your woe. Oh! madam, refumed the other, I am a wretch whose miferies would puzzle conjecture to form any idea of; yet am I not criminal in my wifhes.—Heaven knows how much I hate and fcorn the fin I am forced to act, yet do fuch dreadful circumftances concur to the continuance of it, that I cannot, dare not, refolve againft it. The aftonifhment which Miramillia had before been in being extremely heightened by this exclamation, ſhe intreated, that ſince ſhe had ſaid fo much, ſhe would proceed to the relation of the whole ſad truth, affuring her by repeated aſſeverations, that ſhe never would reveal it. The good nature and prudence of this lady was fo well known to the perſon to whom ſhe ſpoke, that ſhe made no ſcruple of complying with her requeſt; and after allowing herſelf ſome few moments to recollect what ſhe was about to ſay, began to ſatisfy the impatient curioſity of her friend in theſe or the like terms.

The

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*The History of BELLAZARA, ANTONIUS, and  
the vile MERCINO.*

**Y**OU know, madam, said she, that I was born of parents more eminent for their virtue, and the good offices they had the honour to do the state, than for the greatness of their patrimony: they were not, however, so destitute of the goods of fortune, but that at the death of my father, I found myself in possession of sufficient to support me in a handsome manner, if I continued as I was, though not to entitle me to any expectations in marriage equal with my birth; for which reason I resolved never to think of it, and because I would give nobody an opportunity of enquiring into my circumstances, I lived with my mother in the most retired manner, neither visiting, nor receiving visits from any but those who were of our kindred. As I had never seen an object capable of inspiring me with a tender passion, I had not the least regret at the necessity there appeared of remaining in a single state, till one day happening to be at our Lady's chapel, I saw a gentleman who appeared to me of so exact a form, and something  
so

so very engaging in every little gesture and motion, that my heart became insensibly ensnared, and I said to myself, Good God! that I were worthy the affections of that charming chevalier. I confess my thoughts were so wholly taken up with him, that I could regard nothing else; I fancied also that he had taken particular notice of me, and that he might the more do so, I let my veil fall off as if by accident, and discovered my face to him, when I perceived his eyes were fixed on me; but my vanity had no inconsiderable mortification, when presently after I saw him quit the chapel: I cannot express the inward vexation this action gave me; I was once or twice about to leave the place, but my reason reminding me how ridiculous it would be in a person of my sex to go out of a church before divine service was finished, I remained where I was, but with insupportable agonies. Glad was I to be released, that I might go home and indulge my discontent for the affront done to my pride, for I was yet insensible that it was owing to a softer passion: but scarce had I removed a dozen paces from the chapel, when happening on some occasion to look back, I saw the man, who had already given me so much pain, behind me at a little distance; I turned away my head with some scorn, not then imagining he followed me with any design; but when I came to my own door, I saw him standing opposite to it, and as soon as he perceived I took notice of him, made me a low



low bow, and returned the way he came. I was convinced by this action, that I had been mistaken in his sentiments, and that he left the church with no other view than to be ready to observe where I went; and it is altogether impossible for me to make you sensible of what I felt, unless to aid my faint description, you call back in idea those pleasing thrillings which took possession of your heart when first you found yourself beloved by him who was the worthy father of that son whose loss you so truly deplore. All that can be conceived of the joys of love were mine at that transporting instant: but, alas! they were too fleeting and insincere. When I retired to my chamber, intending to indulge the rapturous meditation, the remembrance of the meanness of my fortune changed my late fancied heaven into a real hell.—What, said I to myself, if my person appears amiable in his eyes, if our circumstances are disproportionate—or if they should prove equal, how little the probability that he will be content to quit the grand pursuits of life, and live in low obscurity merely for the sake of love?—No, cried I again, the nature of mankind is changed since that blest time when love made all their happiness.—It is interest now governs that sordid sex, but wit and beauty have the least part in their wishes.

With these kind of reflections did I torment myself all that night, but early the next morning my maid brought a letter to my bed-side, which

which as near as I can remember contained these lines.

“ *To the most adorable BELLAZARA.* ●

“ **A**MONG the crowd of adorers which  
 “ attend the divine Bellazara whereso-  
 “ ever she goes, you, perhaps, remarked not  
 “ the latest but most passionate of all that vow  
 “ themselves your slaves. I came yesterday  
 “ to pay worship to that virgin saint to whom  
 “ the chapel is dedicated, but the form of my  
 “ devotions were on the sight of your hea-  
 “ venly face transferred from an ideal to a pre-  
 “ sent shrine. Too rudely, I fear to be for-  
 “ given, did I pursue your steps, that I might  
 “ discover the name of my new goddess, and  
 “ know henceforward where to pay my ado-  
 “ rations to her. I will not go about to de-  
 “ lineate perfections which you can better be  
 “ informed of by your glass than by my faint  
 “ description, nor that the passion they have  
 “ inspired is such as can only be consistent  
 “ with the strictest honour, since the character  
 “ of Bellazara is sufficient to strike dead all  
 “ prophane and impure desires. I want but  
 “ an opportunity to convince you of the sin-  
 “ cerity and holy zeal of mine, and to inspire  
 “ you, if possible, with some pity for my suf-  
 “ ferings.—Permit me, then, oh heavenly  
 “ maid ! to throw a bleeding heart beneath  
 “ your feet, and in your presence breathe out  
 “ the tender thrillings of a passion which as  
 “ none

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" none but you can inspire in so superlative a  
 " degree, so also can be felt by none so much  
 " as by

" Your faithfully

" devoted slave,

" ANTONIUS."

" Postscript.

" Oh! if your gentle heart as yet has ever  
 " guessed what it is to love and to despair, be-  
 " lieve my labours in the pangs of both, and  
 " in compassion to my woes, afford an answer  
 " to these distracted lines."

No other heart but one equally enflamed  
 like mine can be capable of conceiving what  
 I felt at the receipt of this letter; I read it a-  
 gain and again, with transports not to be ex-  
 pressed—with raptures almost wild and fran-  
 tick, and I know not when I should have re-  
 covered myself from them, or been able to give  
 over the delightful employment, if my maid  
 had not interrupted me in it, by telling me  
 that the person who brought the letter waited  
 for an answer. These words a little brought  
 me to myself, and I grew ashamed that I had  
 been so much elated with a declaration of this  
 kind from a man who was a perfect stranger  
 to me, and perhaps might have made it only  
 for amusement, and to try whether that cha-  
 racter of reserve I had maintained, was any  
 thing

thing more than a pretence. This suggestion made me resolve to be very cautious in what manner I replied, and calling for paper, I sat up in my bed and wrote in these terms.

“ To ANTONIUS.

“ I T would look like an affectation, which  
 “ I would by all means avoid being  
 “ thought guilty of, to say that I was sur-  
 “ prized at the receipt of a letter such as  
 “ yours; I know very well that nothing is  
 “ more common than for gentlemen to divert  
 “ themselves this way, but as I have hitherto  
 “ given no one any occasion to be merry at  
 “ the expence of my reputation, I am still  
 “ too well armed by my virtue to fear it.—  
 “ If, therefore, you are so well acquainted  
 “ with my character, as you would insinuate,  
 “ you would be sensible, that while I have a  
 “ mother living, it is only by her commands  
 “ I can be influenced to admit visits on the  
 “ score you mention. I think myself obliged,  
 “ however, for the good opinion you seem to  
 “ have of me, and, if real, shall not be re-  
 “ fractory to make a return when permitted  
 “ to do so, by her who has the sole disposal  
 “ of

“ BELLAZARA.”

How very impertinent and ridiculous are  
 the thoughts of lovers! I had no sooner sent  
 3 this



this away, than I repented what I had done ; sometimes I thought it too cold, and at others I imagined the conclusion contained an encouragement which was not consistent with discretion.—I feared to lose him, and yet dreaded to give him hopes which might make him think me cheap ;—in such perplexities was my mind involved, that finding myself not able to conceal them, I pretended a slight indisposition, and kept my bed. My mother, who loved me with all imaginable tenderness, being told of it, came into my chamber, and would not stir from me, though, indeed, at that time I should have been better pleased with her absence, nothing being so welcome to a love-sick heart, as an opportunity to indulge itself with the dear idea. My pretence of the head-ach hindered her, however, from expecting me to speak much, or from entertaining me with any discourses to the prejudice of my contemplations. I was notwithstanding very well satisfied, when a servant informing her a gentleman desired to speak with her, she left the room and me to the entire freedom of my own cogitations. But how infinitely more than ever tumultuous would they have been, had any secret sympathy informed me to whom it was she was called down, and on what score. The truly enamoured Antonius thinking the best proof of his passion was obedience, had no sooner considered my letter, than he came to our house, and in such moving terms solicited my

my mother for the approbation of his suit, and leave to visit me, that she was perfectly charmed with his behaviour, and finding by the relation he gave her of himself, that he was of equal birth, and of a fortune not so great as to make him contemn my want, nor so mean as to require the assistance of a wife to enable him to live in a handsome, though not in a grand manner, looked on his proposals as my happiness, and assured him, that if on enquiring into his character, she found it such as she expected, she would not be wanting in her endeavours to make me think as well of him as he wished.

He was no sooner gone, than she returned to my chamber, and gave me an account of all that passed, and the new conquest I had made; his discretion having kept him from revealing a word of the letter he had sent me, or that he had received from me. It was well for me that I was in bed, shadowed with the curtains, else the confusion of my thoughts between surprize and joy, must have infallibly disclosed itself in my face, and my mother would in a moment have discovered the weakness of my soul.

She failed not to enquire among her acquaintance the character of Antonius, and finding every thing answerable to her wishes, she commanded me as a mother, and advised me as a friend, to receive him in a manner becoming his worth, and the passion he had expressed for me. She set forth the advantages

tages and comforts of a married state, and enforced the insults to which our helpless sex are exposed, and from which there is no sure defence but a good husband, with so strenuous an air, that had I been as much averse as I was now become the contrary, I must have yielded to her reasons. I had the authority of a parent, however, to save my blushes, and when I consented to be the bride of Antonius, it was the opinion of all that knew me, that I did so more out of obedience to her, than any inclination of my own; all, I say, but my dear Antonius believed this of me; but long before the happy knot was tied, had I confessed to him the tenderness he had inspired. Never did any pair set forward in their journey of marriage with a greater prospect of pursuing it with an uninterrupted happiness than we. Some few months after, I had the misfortune to lose my mother; and though I had all the just grief imaginable, at being deprived of so tender a parent and assured a friend, yet I felt it not so deeply as I should have done, had I remained in a single state, or had been married to a comforter less dear, or less industrious to divert my melancholy, than Antonius.

Oh Miramillia! continued she, weeping; Bellazara, how happy, how truly contented, how capable of serving you was at that time my unincumbered mind!—and how dreadful a change have I since experienced—at once deprived of innocence and ease, and plunged

plunged in guilt and grief, no more to know a moment's comfort—undone beyond the power of even heaven itself to help me. O pity me, kind friend, obliging Miramillia! and from an idea in thy own breast of horror, and of shame, to anticipate what I have to say, and lessen some part of that surprize, which else must be too shocking, at a story such as mine. But why do I ask an impossibility? no imagination, no conception can arrive at that height of misery which is the portion of my state, and to have any notion what it is, it is necessary to be informed at full.

The agonies which at this moment seized her soul, took from her the power of prosecuting her story, till she had vented some part of them in tears and groans, and perhaps had not recovered her disorders in a much longer time, if Miramillia had not entreated her to summon her resolution to her aid, and by relating her misfortunes give her the opportunity to comfort and advise her.

At last, recollecting herself as well as she was able; in the most perfect tranquillity, resumed she, did we live, till one unhappy night, Antonius staying abroad somewhat more late than ordinary, I went to bed, contrary to my custom, which was always to wait his coming; where I was no sooner laid than my ill genius threw me into a sound sleep, which I was however awaked from by the strenuous embraces of my husband, as I

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then



then thought ; but oh ! soon, though too late, to prevent my everlasting shame was I undeceived, a loud knocking at the door made the supposed Antonius start from my arms and bed, and run hastily out of the room ; the surprize I was in at his behaviour, made me throw a loose night-gown on, and follow him, not able to imagine what should occasion him to leave his bed, and supply his servant's place in opening the door ; but, great God, what was it I felt ! all words made use of to express astonishment, horror, or distraction, would be too mean to paint the nameless anguish of my soul, when I perceived Mercino, a fellow who served Antonius in quality of a valet de chambre, dressing himself hastily in a little room adjoining to mine. Scarce could I ask where Antonius was, so much did I dread to be informed, and so much cause had I to fear the horrid truth ; yet did I trembling speak the words. On which the monster, with an impudence which sure was never paralleled, replied to me in this manner.

The passion, said he, which your charms have long inspired me with, has forced me to take the opportunity of your husband's absence, to make myself master of a happiness I despaired to obtain by any other means—if you are wise you will keep what has happened secret. As he was speaking, the knocking at the door redoubled, and having got his clothes on, he ran down stairs hastily, leaving

ing me half stupified with the sudden shock of woe. I had neither the power, nor time, to think what I should do before the villain returned. It was not, said he, Antonius, as I imagined, at the door, but a messenger from him, sent to acquaint you, he is with company from whom he cannot disengage himself some hours. This absence of his, cried he, gives you opportunity to reflect how much better it is, not to expose yourself by revealing any thing to him of this affair, which being past recall, will but bring an eternal discontent on him, and shame to you: had you not been too charming, pursued the wretch, I had not thus far presumed, and had you been less ravishing in the joys of love, I sooner had forsook your arms, and all, perhaps, had past but as a dream; but so transporting did I find you, that all I had to fear from the discovery of my crime, or the vengeance of Antonius, seemed of no weight to drag me from that scene of present extacy, which, said he, offering to take me in his detested arms, if you were sensible how much I prized, you would be kind, and suffer me to repeat.

Oh Miramillia! judge my lost condition, the horror of it struck me dumb, I had not breath nor words to make reply, but seized with shiverings like the hand of death, I fell motionless and senseless at the villain's feet. Thus once more exposed to the hot lust of this accursed fiend, who seeing me a second

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time in his power, bore me again to the guilty scene of my undoing, and while I had no spirits or strength to enable me to resist, or indeed knowledge of the violence he offered, triumphed in his repeated crime. I recovered from my swoon, oh dreadful remembrance! just as the horrid rapture was completed; distraction, even all that we can conceive of hell, is sure inferior to what I endured; fain would I have alarmed, by my shrieks and cries, the other servants of the house; fain would I have tore out the villain's eyes, which seemed to sparkle with pleasure at my shame, but with his hand upon my mouth, he stopped the one, and by superior strength, the other; with one hand he did confine both mine; and throwing with his legs the bed-clothes on the floor, took a malicious pride in viewing my naked limbs, and adding to the horrid fact he had committed, ten thousand monstrous indecencies. Nothing is more strange, than that the various and tumultuous passions with which my soul was agitated, while lying in this shameful position, did not break the strings of life; but oh! I was reserved to suffer a long series of misery; and though a thousand times I wished for death, I could not die.

After the villain had enough satisfied his curiosity, and that more odious passion which had induced him to my ruin, he told me, that Antonius's life depended on my forgiveness of what he had done; he informed me, that

that in his youth an unlucky quarrel happening between him and a young nobleman of great account, it was the lot of my unhappy husband to overcome by the death of his adversary ; that none but himself had been privy to the accident, and that he had helped to convey the dead body to the water-side, and throw it into the river, where it was afterwards taken up, and great rewards offered by the senate for the discovery of the murderer ; but, said he, as interest never could prevail on me to betray him, so let not your wild revenge, by exposing me to him, oblige me, in my own defence, to give up his life to the offended law, who else would take away mine in reparation of his honour.

I know not, continued the afflicted Bellazara, if I had endured more from rage and shame at his late behaviour, than I now did from grief, at the impossibility there was of being revenged. I weighed in my mind the circumstances of this story ; I knew very well that such a person had been killed, and that the murderer never had been revealed ; I now reflected, that when ever any mention had casually been made of that affair, Antonius sighed and appeared extremely pensive, all which I had been used to think proceeded from the remembrance of the intimacy formerly between him and that young lord, but it now seemed a plain evidence of his guilt. I knew also that Mercino lived with him at that time, and that he treated him with a



kindness which I had often wondered at, but now too well found the meaning of. Having considered, as well as my disorders would give me leave, on all these things; my reason informed me, that if I should acquaint Antonius with my wrongs, the incapacity of revenging them would involve him in a continual discontent, without the least benefit to my wounded honour; and, perhaps, also the knowledge of what I had sustained, though involuntarily, would lessen his affection for me, without which I could not live: but what most of all prevailed on me to be silent, was the apprehension that a husband, who loved me with that tenderness Antonius did, could not so well conceal his hatred of the wretch who had abused me; but that he would perceive it enough to make him think he was betrayed, and endeavour to save himself from any private mischief, by impeaching him he would have so much cause to fear.

Mercino left me to the freedom of my thoughts for a good while, neither offering to speak to me, nor touch me; till perceiving me burst into a flood of tears, he imagined my rage was giving way to grief; and then, Well, madam, said he, are you yet resolved? Shall Antonius live or die? Oh! he must not die, answered I, by any fault of mine; rather will I conceal thee from his rage, than suffer him to be exposed to thy malice. But think how hard is the restraint  
I put

I put upon myself, and do not, by any future villanies, provoke me to break through all the considerations of my love, and force me to give up Antonius to be eased of thee. That, cried he, would be to render fruitless all I have done: my desires for the possession of your beauties are not extinguished by the hasty transports I have snatched; first, in the person of another, and afterward when you were not in a condition to aid the extacy. No, I must have you all! you must be mine without reluctance; together must we give a loose to love, and lose ourselves in rapture. Those lovely arms must spread with willing twinings round my neck. Those lips must, of their own accord, meet mine; and that dear breath, made up of life-restoring sweets, infuse new wishes, new desires, when sinking nature faints, and scarce sustains the unutterable joy. In fine, you must have no reserve; but when I rush, thus fired with passion in your breast, you must—'Till now I had suffered him to proceed without interruption; but when I found him again preparing to reiterate his crime; No, never, cried I, will I in thought consent to wrong Antonius. What thou hast already done, has been by base deceit or brutal force. Thou hast made me wretched, but shalt never make me guilty. In speaking this, I made use of my utmost efforts to thrust him from me, and at the same time to raise myself from the bed; which he perceiving, unloosed his hold,

and with a cold but resolute air, answered me in this manner: Enjoy your humour, madam, said he, I have obtained enough already, as you say, by force and stratagem, to save my life; I shall not now die for love, and will take care not to fall a sacrifice to revenge. That unhappy man, for whom I am despised, shall not long triumph in the joys I languish for. Before to-morrow dawns, your loved Antonius shall, in a dungeon, have other affairs than your charms to employ his thoughts. I will go this moment and have him taken, before your care can invent means to warn him of his fate. As he concluded these words, he made an offer of leaving the bed; and I, who doubted not but he would do as he had threatened, seized with the most poignant anguish and killing apprehension, just in that moment of my terror for him, whom more than life I love, cried out to him, I hated to have mercy, and not destroy me in the person of Antonius. Cruel Mercino, said I, can you not be content with the eternal ruin you have brought on me, and the vow which now I make, by all my hopes hereafter, never to reveal your crime, and my undoing, but you must also take the life of poor Antonius? Accuse not me, rejoined he, but your own obstinacy; you cannot be more fully mine than you have been in fact; I ask but the permission of renewing, with your consent, those dear delights I have experienced. Swear to do that, and as  
an

an earnest, that you will be hereafter kind, yield to me now, and your husband shall be safe; but your refusal is his inevitable death. O dire necessity! cried I, some pitying power instruct me what to do. Must I resign my soul to vice, or give up Antonius's precious life to the devouring hand of justice? Kill, kill me, complete thy villanies and end my shame, barbarous Mercino, continued I, and spare my farther guilt. I uttered many more exclamations of the same nature, but he was wholly unmoved at all I said; and the time being pretty near relapsed, in which he expected the return of Antonius, let me know, that he was absolutely determined to quit the house before he came, and rouse the judges with the information. This moment, cried he, is the crisis of your husband's fate, or now consent, or it is too late to save him. What shall I say, Miramillia! added she, my too great tenderness for this dear man, prevailed on me to join in his dishonour with the wretch I hated: in the midst of tears, and sighs, and curses, half raving, half dying with my griefs, did I submit myself a prey to lust and shame, and became wicked as I was miserable. Satiated for that time, and every moment expecting the arrival of his injured master, he forsook my bed, having extorted from me new vows of an eternal secrecy, and left me the most wretched, most undone of all created beings.



Here was the unhappy Bellazara again interrupted in the prosecution of her narration by her sighs and tears, which having a little overcome, she pursued in this manner.

How difficult was it for me, resumed she, to conceal my disorders from Antonius at his return, which happened soon after, you may easily imagine: there was no way for me to do it, but by pretending an indisposition, which, joined with his having drank a little too freely, made him not so readily observe that I attempted to deceive him. Some extraordinary business taking him into the country the next morning early, I had yet a longer time to vanquish those symptoms of my disquiet, which were too visible to be concealed; and though not one day during his absence passed, without the vile Mercino's renewing our now mutual guilt, my shame, and my dear husband's dishonour; yet did the force of my resolution to save his life, enable me to stem the tide of mingled passions, with which my poor tormented soul was overwhelmed; and at his return he perceived nothing in me of that horror, which was, which is, and must for ever be the inhabitant of my breast.

Thus am I forced to assist the raptures of this detested monster, having no hope of returning to virtue or to peace, but by his ceasing to desire I should be guilty; which yet, alas! I have not the least prospect of. Other women complain of the instability of their  
lovers

lovers affections, and mourn their want of power to retain their hearts; but I, against my will, find every hour his hated ardours fiercer, and each enjoyment more furious than the former, though curses accompany my forced compliance, though my eyes dart only glances of contempt and scorn; though every breath proclaims a wish to blast him; though every action declares it is fear alone, for my Antonius's life, which drag me to his loathed arms, and I could kill, could stab, could mangle the body, my wretched fate compels me to possess; yet in the midst of all this hell of hate does he extract a bliss, and racks me with the sight of his detested transports—with wild delight he gazes on my face, devours my lips, dies on my breast with extacies too extravagant to bear, till I grow mad with rage, with spite, and shame.

Oh now advise, instruct me, Miramillia, what to do, to make my form less pleasing to his eyes, or to return to virtue by some other means; a thousand times have I been tempted to rid myself of any future acts of sin by giving him a cup of poison, or some secret stab, when all dissolved in love he lay defenceless to the stroke, but still the thoughts of murder checked my purpose, and preserved him; yet have I not wholly cast it off, and will by your more penetrating judgment be directed which of these ills to chuse, since one must be, either to live his wretched prostitute, or become his murderer.

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It was some time before Miramillia could make any reply to these words, so much had the story amazed her; but when she did, it was in this manner.

Little is it in my power, said she, unhappy friend, to advise or comfort you, but yet beware of murder—observe with what severity it is punished by the hand of heaven in poor Antonius; though he escapes the law, how dear his fatal confidence has cost him—the base Mercino, if not by that assured, perhaps had never dared to attempt the virtue of his master's wife; or had he done, a just revenge had washed your stains away, and given you back your peace of mind, which while compelled to give yourself to one, whom reason and religion bids you loath and scorn.

They had many other discourses of much the same nature, but neither being able to afford any relief to the afflictions of the other, they separated in a few days; but before Miramillia took her leave, the other reminded her of a lady, in whose breast (if it were any where to be found) reigned an undisturbed contentment. She had been of Miramillia's acquaintance when she conversed in the world, and she doubted not, but she should obtain from her, if in her power, what she so long had sought in vain from others.

She made, therefore, but a short stay at home, at her return from the house of Bellazara, but prepared herself to visit this lady, and to give her a recital of the misfortune which

which had made her so long absent herself from the society of her friends, and had now again restored her to them, at least to those of them from whom she had any hope of experiencing the judgment and veracity of the fortune-teller.

The person to whom the disconsolate Miramillia was now, by the advice of the more unhappy Bellazara, about to apply herself, was one in whose fortune there was indeed the utmost appearance of serenity. She was married to a man she long had loved, but had been prevented from being his wife, by her parents, who looked on him as her inferior, in point of wealth. She now seemed to be possessed of all she had to wish, and was universally believed to be among the happy few. The manner in which she received Miramillia, and the influence of every thing about her, with the tender affection she observed between her and her husband, made this afflicted mother conceive great hopes that her search was here to end.

For which reason letting her know she had something to communicate, she engaged her to retire with her into a room apart from the company; and there related to her the occasion of her coming; at which the other appeared not less surprized than those to whom she had before addressed this suit; vain she would have dissuaded her from suffering herself to be imposed on, by the arts of those fellows who have no other livelihood than  
what



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what they extract from the ignorant and credulous ; but Miramillia, who still continued resolute on making the experiment, would not suffer her to proceed for any time on this theme, and Stenoclea, for so she was called, had too much complaisance to enter with her into an argument which she perceived her friend determined to defend ; with an air of pleasantry therefore, which had in it, however, somewhat of dissatisfaction, she told her, that whatever reasons she might have to think herself unqualified for this employment, she would undertake it ; because, said she, how little soever you may benefit by it, I am certain of receiving one very great advantage by it, which is the happiness I shall enjoy in your society, which of necessity you must afford me for the time in which I am at work for you. Miramillia, extremely pleased at the grant of her request, answered this complement only with a smile and bow, and returned with her to the company, having obtained her promise of beginning the work the next day.

Three days had Miramillia past in this house, in which time both Stenoclea, and Armuthi her husband, seemed to study nothing so much as to divert her melancholy, but all the feats and sports their kindness invented, afforded but a small portion of satisfaction, when compared with that she conceived, at seeing this lady busily employed in that task, which so many had refused to undertake,

dertake, and from which she had a greater hope than she would make show of, of obtaining her desires, and once more embracing her beloved son. It was now more than half accomplished, when Armuthi being abroad, and the two ladies sitting together conversing on ordinary affairs, a servant, with grief and confusion visible in his face, entreated to speak in private to Stenoclea, who trembling, as if fearing some expected ill, bad him follow her into another room. Stenoclea returned not to Maramillia, till she had heard a great noise below stairs, and a strange confusion of voices, which now gave this unsatisfied mother sufficient cause to apprehend, that something had fallen out which would render this lady also incapable of doing her the service she required. As she was thus reflecting and lamenting the misfortunes of others as well as herself, Stenoclea, with streaming eyes, and all the symptoms of grief appeared : Oh ! Miramillia, cried she, it is now no longer in my power to impose on you, those fears which made me ever incapable of doing you the service you required, though I concealed them in hopes to put an end to so fruitless an enquiry, are now come to pass, and I must now be known to be the wretch I am ; fain would I have deceived you into an opinion of my happiness, that by shewing you how ineffectual the performance of what you asked would prove to prevent you from being any longer deceived by the subtilty of that vain predictor, who advised

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vised you to this search—but I am prevented in my design, and so far from that happiness you wish to find, must own my breast a perfect hell of wild confusion, grief, despair, and shame.

It is hard to say, whether Miramillia was more surprized or troubled at so sudden an alteration; but having made use of her utmost eloquence to persuade her to a patient enduring of her fate, entreated she would relate by what means she was become unhappy; on which the other endeavouring to subdue her passions, replied, that she had not thus long made a secret to her, of her most private affairs, but with an intention to put her off giving credit to the fortune-teller, and perplexing herself with a vain enquiry after what it was scarce probable she would ever find, or if she did, would be of no consequence to her desires in the end.

Long, said she, have I been wretched, through the fears of that misfortune which is now arrived; and when you addressed to me as to a happy person, my full eyes were ready in a flood of tears to convince you of your mistake, and proclaim the situation of my heart; but friendship interposed, and told me, that by deceiving you this once, I should preserve you from continuing to be deceived, since in finding no effect from that piece of sempstry which you believed performed by hands proper to undertake it, you would no more have relied on that fabulous prediction,

fiction, which I perceive has already given you so much fruitless toil. But my deligns are now disappointed, the cruel certainty of my fate leave me no room for hope, or for concealment, you and the whole world must now be sensible, the sun in his extensive progress sees not a wretch so lost, To dead to comfort, as the undone Stenoclea.

The distraction of her thoughts here broke in, and for a considerable space of time would not permit her to utter one coherent sentence; but summoning the whole force of that resolution she was mistress of, she at length recovered herself enough to satisfy the high-raised curiosity of Miramillia, and being again desired by her, prepared to give her the account she was so impatient of, and seating herself by her, began in these or the like terms.



The



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*The History of STENOCLÆA, and the Signior's  
ARMUTHI and BARNIBAR.*

TO make you acquainted, said she, with the means which has brought the sad catastrophe of my fate about, as also to let you a little into the nature and dispositions of the persons concerned in it, I must enlarge my story, by going back into those years which may properly enough be called my childish ones; many things happening at that time, though long since past, which have drawn on the misery of the present.

Know then, dear Miramillia, that I was bred the darling of my doating parents, my only brother being many years elder, and then abroad on his travels; I was looked on as the comfort of their age, their marriage having never produced any other offspring than us two. I need not tell you how careful they were of my education, the little understanding I still retain in poetry, mathematics, musick, dancing, and those other accomplishments proper for a person of my sex, will sufficiently inform you; they desired I should be mistress, in as high a degree as my capacity would permit, of every thing desirable in a woman. The reputation of improvement,

provement however, which those who had the care of instructing me, favoured me with, joined to a tolerable share of beauty, gained me, before I reached the age of fourteen, a great number of visitors, who pretended themselves devoted to my charms ; how much the generality of them were so in reality, I gave myself not the trouble to examine, my whole wishes and desires being centred in the agreeable Armuthi ; a gentleman, whose maturity may inform you, was all that was love-inspiring in his bloom ; his age did not at that time exceed mine above five years, yet was there something of a manly majesty, which, mingled with the native sweetness and innocence of his unexperienced youth, gave such charms to his air, which I am unable to express : but he was inferior in point of fortune ; and that deficiency, in the eyes of my parents, (who partially examined the merits of their daughter, might entitle her to the greatest expectations) over-balanced all his perfections. They could have given me a dowry which might have served as a competency for both, and made his wants unfelt : not all the tenderness I regarded him with, though not unknown to them, could prevail on them to consent, that I should match with one whose only jointure was his love. In fine, they were now past all remembrance of what once they were, had lost in age the softening desires of youth, and looked on grandeur as the only felicity in marriage.

They

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They were continually preaching to me the pleasures of title and precedence; representing to me the instability of those desires which personal perfections excites, and the numberless ills to which a woman is exposed, who gives herself away merely for the sake of love; they bad me reflect on the mutability of all passions, and especially on that by which I was at present influenced; how wretched I should be if Armuthi, after becoming my husband, should swerve from his, or I repent that which had made me his; reminded me that the tie of marriage was irrevocable, and that if either of us deviated from our first flame, with what anxiety the chain would be dragged by both. But this was a doctrine in which I had no faith; I could not believe there was a possibility for love, like ours, ever to diminish; and as to any other mischiefs, I set them at naught. A thousand times [good heaven! pardon the wild exclamation] I have cried out, O let Armuthi be but mine, and I defy the rest that fate can do.

But I will not detain you with any particulars of the extravagance of my passion, which are not altogether material to my story; it shall suffice to tell you, that I loved too well to listen to the pretences of any other, though there were many who solicited my father on my account, and some of them very advantageous; but I was not to be moved by their despair, by the entreaties and commands of my parents, nor by any considerations

considerations of my own interest ; and made no scruple of resolutely declaring, that since I could not be the wife of Armuthi, I would be so of no man. This equally passionate lover would fain have persuaded me to make my escape, and wholly neglecting all future contingencies fly with him to some place, where unknown we might obtain the means of being made one, and consummate our loves ; nay, once had he, for a handsome bribe, prevailed on a priest to join our hands without the knowledge of my obdurate parents ; but neither to the one nor the other would I give consent ; not that I denied through any fears of what might happen to myself for such an act of disobedience, but that I could not bear the thoughts of involving him in the misfortunes which must inevitably fall on me. I loved him with too much real tenderness to consent he should be unhappy with me ; and even wished he loved me less, since I found he could not be so without me.

In spite of the diligence with which I was observed, I made use of stratagems which frequently gave us the blessing of meeting, if that can be called so, which was indeed no other than an opportunity of condoling each other, and lamenting our mutual woes. My mother's death, which happened in this time, rid me of one very watchful spy, and though I regarded her with a dutiful respect and love, yet it was so inferior to that I bore Armuthi, that



that the joy I took in finding myself more at liberty to see him, took away great part of that sorrow I should else have felt for the loss of so near and dear a relation. My father, who had, perhaps, more tenderness for her than he was sensible of himself, survived her not more than half a year, but died with the same resolution that he had lived, to prevent my marriage with Armuthi; and that he might the more certainly do so, he left my fortune dependent on my brother, and to be forfeited to him if ever I became the wife of that present gentleman; and lest my tears should work on his yielding nature to consent to it, the estate which was to descend to him, to be the portion of another; both of us to be cut off from his name and title, and as we obeyed this injunction to be blessed or cursed. Severe decree of a dying parent! yet such was the aversion he had conceived for this match, that he would omit nothing which he thought might be a means to hinder it. All the hopes I had wished on the known sweetness of my brother's disposition were now vanished, since he could not consent I should be the bride of Armuthi, without incurring the curse of our father; nor had the power to preserve me from beggary, without being made a beggar himself. I thought my condition now more desperate than ever; I had indeed no longer obstacles to keep me from conversing with this idol of my soul, as often or as freely as I pleased; but to what end did I see or converse

averse with him, but to become more unhappy by the daily discovery of some new charm, and the reflection that I must never be more his than now I was? I had but one faint shadow of a comfort, and that was, that at my brother's return, which was now expected every hour, I should persuade him to mitigate the sentence of my father's testament; and though he could not suffer me to receive my dowry, might evade the penalty of paying it, by allowing me the interest of it *per Annum*, under the denomination of charity. This I sometimes flattered myself I should persuade him to do, and it was this alone which the unhappy Armuthi and myself had to preserve us from despair; for he, alas! had no probable view of maintaining the charges of a family, his whole dependance being on the favour of an uncle, who, though he very much encouraged his addressee to me, while there was the least hope of prevailing on my father to consent to the marriage, was now as much averse, since he had heard the cruel conditions of his will; and often chid Armuthi for continuing his visits to me. I had not seen him for two days, when, to my inexpressible surprize and grief, I received this letter from him.

Here Stenoclea opened her cabinet, and taking out a paper, read to Miramillia the following lines.

“ To

“ To the loveliest, most angelick of her sex,  
 “ the dear unfortunate STENOCLEA, does  
 “ her ever adoring, ever faithful, though  
 “ now despairing ARMUTHI, send this last  
 “ testimony of an inviolable, but destructive  
 “ passion.

“ **M**Y tongue has for some time been  
 “ endeavouring in vain to tell you,  
 “ oh my for ever loved Stenoclea ! what now  
 “ I force my pen to do. Oh God ! with  
 “ what words shall I express what it is I  
 “ mean ? Can I live, and say that I no more  
 “ must see you ; no more must feast my ra-  
 “ vishing eyes with the wonders of your beau-  
 “ ty ; no more must listen to the enchanting  
 “ harmony of your heavenly voice ; no more  
 “ must hear you own a tenderness, which to  
 “ be blessed with, there is not a saint but  
 “ might forego his heaven, and stand excused  
 “ for change of rapture ? To what a hell am  
 “ I accursed that must endure all this ? Nay,  
 “ like Bellerophon, must my own sentence  
 “ bear. Yet will I not complain, nor utter  
 “ one syllable to express the anguish of my  
 “ soul, or excite an unavailing pity in yours.  
 “ Fate, who ordains me to this misery, will  
 “ soon, I hope, be kindly cruel, and make  
 “ it too violent to be lasting, and strike me  
 “ dead at once. For oh, Stenoclea ! I have  
 “ resolved to go for ever from you ; to carry  
 “ from

“ from your sight a wretch, whose contagious  
 “ woes drives peace and happiness from their  
 “ loved mansion, your gentle breast. Never,  
 “ never, never will I renew those vain desires  
 “ of unaccomplished love, nor persecute you  
 “ with a fruitless suit. Far from your sight  
 “ will I conceal for ever this ill-fated form,  
 “ too much beloved, since too little worthy  
 “ of being loved; and leave you to regain  
 “ that peace which I have too long destroyed.  
 “ Guilty as miserable should I be to  
 “ wish, much less to attempt, the obscuring  
 “ of so bright a star; and involving in the  
 “ gloom of mine, a life which has so many  
 “ opportunities of shining with the utmost  
 “ splendor. Oh! may no thought of me  
 “ overcloud your future joys, but an eternal  
 “ round of blessings crown each ensuing day.  
 “ Farewell; believe, that in forsaking you I  
 “ now do more to prove my love, than had  
 “ I spent the best part of my blood in fighting  
 “ with some happier rival; nay, even in  
 “ dying for you: that had been a glorious  
 “ end, but this I now go to seek, a mean,  
 “ lingering, and painful one. Pity me, oh!  
 “ to the last moment of my life, adored and  
 “ loved Stenoclea, for I would still be pitied,  
 “ though not loved. Heaven! that I should  
 “ with Stenoclea not to love me. What is  
 “ there but that dear comfort to withhold me  
 “ from running madly into some desperate  
 “ action, and breaking through all laws both  
 “ human and divine. Yet, till you cease to  
 H “ afford



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“ afford it, peace must be a stranger to your  
 “ breast. Forget me then, banish me your  
 “ thoughts; damn me to the lowest hell by  
 “ your indifference, or contempt, or hate;  
 “ but wish me not to live: in mercy pray for  
 “ the speedy death of

“ The despairing,

“ The distracted,

“ Yet adoring

“ ARMUTHI.”

“ P. S. What I have resolved, not even  
 “ your commands shall prevent me from exe-  
 “ cuting; this therefore comes expecting no  
 “ reply, and before you can have formed one,  
 “ shall be past the reach of it. Adieu once  
 “ more too lovely, and too good for my re-  
 “ pose or your own.”

I cannot express the grief I was in at the receipt of this letter, I was nearly touched with the generosity of his behaviour, and joined with him in the opinion, that since there was scarce a possibility of our being at peace, and indeed the reputation of both, demanded our separation, yet could I not consent to it; I found my soul too weak to resolve against what gave me so much pleasure as his society, even though it were only a partnership in misfortunes. I sent immediately to his lodgings, charging the messenger  
 to

to tell him, I must speak with him before he went. But my commands arrived too late, and I was soon after informed, by one who was intimate with his uncle, that he was gone to travel, but to what part of the world was kept a secret. His only design, as he has since told me, being to seek a cure for his hopeless passion, he thought it would be an ill recipe to feed the distemper by letters or messages from the beloved object. This relation of his alone knew where he went; and having so great a desire to prevent his nephew's throwing himself away, as he called it, on a woman, who if she married him must have no fortune, there was little probability he would reveal it. Inconsolable was I for his departure, sometimes believing his proceeding had been occasioned by an excess of love, and regard for my repose; at others, that it was owing to the want of it; and whenever this last reflection came across my thoughts, it gave me pains too terrible for description.

Soon after this I received letters from Barnibar, so my brother was called, dated from Padua, which brought me word, he was on his return, and would speedily be in Venice: never was there a more tender affection than that with which we had regarded each other before he went to travel; and as I had not abated any part of that which I had felt for him, so I suspected not that absence had diminished his for me, and promised myself in his society a real consolation for the loss of

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Armuthi : but, O God ! when I expected to embrace him, and every moment thought the next would bring him to my arms, I received an account of his death, that he was killed by a gentleman on the road, with whom he unfortunately happened to quarrel, and a servant he had with him endeavouring to revenge his master's death, was also left for dead ; that the person by whom this misfortune had happened was unknown, and had made his escape, so that all hope of doing justice to his manes was extinguished.

Judge what a surprize this must be to a sister that so tenderly loved him ; I found no comfort in the vast fortune which by his death I became mistress of, and looked on myself as the most forlorn creature in the world. O, Armuthi ! would I cry, thou hast abandoned me, and heaven knows where thy despair will carry thee—and Barnibar ! thou who alone by thy advice and tender friendship couldst have brought peace to my afflicted soul, art torn from me by some inhuman hand—O ! bring the murderer to light, good heaven, pursued I, that I may prosecute him with the severest vengeance—let him be taken, let him be detected, when he least fears the danger, and sudden ruin overwhelm him, as that he brought on Barnibar my unhappy brother.

But I will not, continued she, weeping afresh at this part of her story, prolong the sad catastrophe of my fate, by repeating to  
you

you the exclamations I made, or the thousand vows I offered up to heaven, and every faint, for bringing forth this unknown destroyer of my brother's life. I had scarce celebrated the solemnity of his funeral before I heard Armuthi was brought back to Venice, being seized on the road with so violent an indisposition, that he was unable to pursue his journey, and had taken the first opportunity of a letter for his return. It was reported he was at the point of death, and entreated to see me. Sure never any heart was subjected to such vicissitudes of anguish, as was mine, to have him restored; but restored in such a manner as must deprive me of him for ever, was infinitely more dreadful than all I had before endured. I now perceived that he was still more dear than Barnibar had been, and that all the ties of blood and kin are far inferior to those of love—in spite of the disgust I had conceived against his uncle, I flew to his house, and regardless of the censure of the world, omitted nothing which I thought might contribute to the recovery of this soul-sick lover, for well I saw grief was his only distemper. My kindness was so great and cordial, that, contrary to the judgment of the physicians, who some hours before I came had said he could not live, I left him very much restored, and in so fair a way of recovery, that it amazed all about him. His uncle, now as obliging to me as he had formerly been the reverse, gave my generosity and con-



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stancy such praises, as whoever had heard might have believed ; he also was my lover : but I took little notice of them, well knowing that to have a great fortune, independent by the death of my brother, was the greatest charm I had for him. Early the next morning did I visit my dear patient again, and found him in a condition, such as gave me great hopes I should complete the cure I had so fortunately began ; in fine, I left him not till it was fulfilled, and having now no obstacle to prevent his being my husband, was married to him in a short time after, to the great satisfaction of his now obliging uncle.

Nothing ever was more ardent, or more tender than the affections of Armuthi, all his actions, all his words, were so many demonstrations of his sincerity ; and as I had given him the utmost proofs of mine, he could not but think his lot extremely fortunate ; yet in the midst of all the joy he expressed at my being his, I every now and then observed some starts of anguish breaking out, and giving a check to rapture, deep groans, and sighs too heavy for restraint, would ever and anon burst from his troubled breast, even when surrounded with his most gay companions ; nor could the chearful glass, when swiftly passing round in jocund healths, repel their force, though oft I have seen, and wondering seen him, struggle with the innate disturbance ; but in unguarded sleep, with what dire furies seemed his brain possessed ! It is false, he would cry,  
wildly

wildly starting up, I killed him not; and then again, throwing himself on the floor in strange convulsions, Hide, hide me, roared he out, from that offended ghost! Stop, stop that stream of blood! it will swallow me! See! I am encompassed with a liquid fire! all hell is on me! Awaked and frightened with such dreadful sounds, I have perforce broken the chain of sleep, and taken him to my arms; but, oh! what tremblings had the dire visions left on all his frame! in vain, with every art of fond endearing love, did I endeavour to bring him back to peace; too well I saw tranquillity was banished from his breast, and he but wore a show of soft contentment. As nothing ought to be a secret between persons whom love and law had united in the sacred tie of marriage, I pressed him, with all the tenderness I was capable of expressing, to reveal to me the cause of his affliction, but never could I obtain from him this proof of what he had so often sworn, to deny me nothing I could ask, and in his power to grant; but, on the contrary, he told me that he had in reality no cause for grief, that those troubled visions were a disorder hereditary to his family, and that it was madness to impute the wild ideas of fancy, in which reason had no part, to any real disorder in the waking mind, which he assured me was entirely free from remorse, or guilt of any secret sin, which should occasion such confusion, as he was sensible sometimes appeared in him. I cannot say I was

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perfectly satisfied with this reply, but having frequently spoke to him on this head, and finding him still the same, and at last to grow a little uneasy, that I expressed a diffidence in what he said; I was obliged to give over any farther interrogatories concerning the affair: his disorders, however, encreasing, especially in sleep, gave me also perturbations which were very terrible to sustain: he so frequently crying out on blood, made me indeed think some had been shed by unwarrantable means, and more than once it struck into my mind, how dreadful a ruin we must be involved in, if by any accident he and my brother should have met, and it should be the ghost of that unhappy youth, whom he so often named, and the bare apprehensions that such a thing was possible, gave me horrors which I am not able to express; but I endeavoured to banish all such thoughts as much as possible, and whenever any thing happened to renew them, strove with all my might to overcome them by arguments of a contrary nature, yet would they not wholly forsake me, and the condition I was in was far from happy.

About five months since our marriage, did I live without any other certainty, that there was something in the bottom of all this, more than what I have told you. Oh! would to God I never had been convinced; suspense, tormenting as it was, was yet inferior to what ensued the dreadful detection of Armuthi's crime,

crime, and my irremediable misfortune; but murder, though for a time concealed, will, some time or other, break forth, and blood will call for blood. I was sitting this morning in a low parlour, when I observed a man who seemed to be enquiring for some person in the neighbourhood; I imagined I had seen the face, and looked more earnestly, when presently I saw him come to our gate, and on his near approach knew him to be Stili-con, an old servant in our family, who had attended my brother in his travels, and the same who was reported to have been murdered with him at Padua: I was infinitely pleased to find him alive, hoping by him I might discover him, who was the destroyer of my dear brother, and take that vengeance which his death required: I ordered he should be admitted immediately, and as soon as he was, began to question him concerning the manner of that unhappy accident; to which he replied in these terms:

We had not, madam, said he, left Padua more than half an hour, before we met a gentleman well mounted, but unattended; either through design or chance, he rode so near my master, that their horses jostled, and the stranger's horse being somewhat fiery, gave a sudden spring, which was very near throwing his rider; he taxed Signior Barnibar with incivility, imputing the cause to him, as not having taken care to guide his beast, or turn him out of the way. My master not



thinking he owed that respect to a person unknown to him, and whose appearance seemed not to command such a difference, answered him in terms befitting the arrogance of the demand; on which the other, who, I believe, was heated with wine, challenged him to the proof, which of them merited to be esteemed the bravest man; my master, unwilling to decline the combat, leaped in a moment from his horse, commanding me to take care of him, and, drawing his sword, ran to meet his antagonist, who was already prepared, and, at the first push, received a wound under his left breast, of which he immediately expired; I, distracted at what I saw, flew to the sword of my dear dead master, resolute to revenge him, or perish with him: I confess myself too weak to do the former, but was pretty near obtaining my desire in the other; for the murderous weapon which had deprived him of life was buried in my body, and but with difficulty drawn thence by its remorseless master, who, leaving me weltering in my blood, to all appearance dead, made the best of his way toward the city. Some passengers soon after coming that way, the body of Signior Barnibar was conveyed back to Padua, whence you know it was afterwards conveyed to Venice, to be interred with his noble ancestors: I was put under the care of an able surgeon, who, contrary to all expectations, worked a cure on me, but I continued so weak, that I was unable to begin my journey till three days since.

since. Heaven has, however, enabled me to return at a season to revenge the untimely death of my dear master. Early this morning, as I was coming to enquire where I might pay my dutiful respects to you, I saw the barbarous assassin, the idea of whose face, since that cursed moment in which I first beheld him, has never been absent from my mind. I followed, unnoticed, and no doubt forgotten by him, till I saw him enter a magnificent house a few streets off, whence running immediately to a magistrate, I made oath of what I knew, and had proper officers, and a warrant granted to apprehend him. He is now under a strong guard; and I can salute you, madam, continued he, with the joyful news that your brother's ghost will shortly have the vengeance it requires.

So strongly, said Stenoclea, did the fears I have already acquainted you with work in me, that for some moments I was incapable of asking Stilicon the name of him whom he had apprehended; but when I did, he answered me, that he was ignorant either of the name or quality of the person, but that having caused him to be seized, he presently enquired where he might find me, being willing to be the first who should acquaint me with the pleasing tidings.

Never was such a mixture of hope and terror as that I endured all the time he was speaking; I could not think it Armuthi, yet would have given almost my life to have been certain

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it was not. About this time I heard you coming down stairs, I ordered the fellow to be entertained by the servants, and came into the room to you; I concealed my disorders as well as I was able, and indeed the more I considered the matter, the more I found comfort; I could not think if it were really my husband who was in custody, but that I should have heard of his misfortune from himself, I resolved, however, to be informed of the truth, by sending a person to the prison; but before I had well determined in what manner to proceed, I was called to one who brought me a letter, the character of which, on the superscription, I knew to be that of Armuthi, and guessed the fatal purport before I read it in these lines.

As she spoke these words she took out of her pocket a letter, which she put into the hands of Miramillia, to read while she indulged the greatness of her sorrows in tears, now again past the power of utterance by speech: her sympathizing friend considering, to repeat the contents of that paper would serve but to encrease her griefs, read to herself as follows,

“Ta

*To my dear injured STENOCLEA.*

I Need not now be demanded the reasons  
of that despair you have so often ob-  
served, and which were indeed too justly  
visible for you not to perceive, yet heaven  
will, I hope, forgive a crime which was  
involuntary.—Oh! that you would as rea-  
dily be brought not to hate the man, whose  
death will soon atone the murder of Bar-  
nibar; but that were too vain a hope: by  
one rash act I have deprived you of a bro-  
ther, who was extremely dear to you, and  
of a husband who valued nothing in com-  
petition with you—what can I say in vin-  
dication of what I have done, which will not  
seem rather to add to the heinousness of it?  
yet had I loved you to a less violent degree,  
I had not been thus criminal; the grief I  
conceived for having taken the life of an  
innocent gentleman, and the brother of  
Stenoclea, should have made me, the next  
moment I knew to whom my sword had  
been so fatal, resigned myself to justice;  
and, self-accused, testified how little my  
heart was capable of taking the part of  
murder, though acted by my own hand:  
but, oh! I must then have gone to the  
grave unblest with your possession—it  
was not life, but the enjoyment of Steno-  
clea, that made me screen the murder of  
your brother from the just censure of the  
law;



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“law; yet, oh! I confess it was a self-inter-  
 “ested flame, and you ought never to forgive  
 “the man, who, to feast on your charms,  
 “involved you in his destruction. Horrid  
 “guilt! I tremble to think how much I have  
 “wronged you; pity me, it is all I ask; as  
 “for a mitigation of my first crime, the kill-  
 “ing of your brother, it is, what I neither  
 “hope, nor will endeavour; the law requires  
 “my blood, and I will yield it a willing sa-  
 “crifice; be you no more severe, nor hate af-  
 “ter death, him who only wished to live for  
 “you, and never can be other than

“Your most passionately

“affectionate, though unhappy,

“and too guilty husband,

“ARMUTHI,

“P. S. I dare not entreat to see you, in  
 “the circumstances under which I am; yet  
 “hope you will not refuse that comfort to my  
 “latest moments, which shall be all employ-  
 “ed in imploring blessings on you. Once  
 “more pardon and pity the wretch, who was  
 “your faithful husband and ever adorer.”

Now tell me, Miramillia, resumed Steno-  
 clea, gentle lady advise me what to do, if a  
 condition so truly desperate as mine can ad-  
 mit of any which may afford the least sha-  
 dow of a comfort. The moment I had read  
 these heart-wounding lines, officers came into  
 my

my house, are now in possession as of the goods of a delinquent, and shortly will the lost Armuthi be made an example of publick justice, and I, his wife, be driven out to ills, the least of which is beggary.

Few people had more the art of persuasion, or a greater share of good nature to comfort the distressed, than Miramillia; but the case was here too desperate, and all she could do for a long time, was to bear her company in tears; but recovering herself as well as she was able, she at last begged she would not give way to sorrow; and starting on a sudden, as one waked from a trance, Since you desire my advice, Stenoclea, said she, I will give it you, and have bethought me of a way, which, if it succeeds, will save you all from the miseries you dread; Armuthi will live; your reputation will be safe, and goods and lands preserved. You must, continued she, bend your whole study to raise friends to procure a pardon for your husband; thus far the duty of a wife obliges you to do; but as it is your brother he has killed, ill would it become you to live with the murderer of so near and dear a relation. No, you must save Armuthi, but must see him no more. You must be content to pass the remainder of your days in lonely solitude, a widow while your husband lives; and I think, said she, should you dispose, in charitable uses, one half of that estate which by his death would all be forfeited for a less pious end; and with the other retire to a cloyster,

ster, there to pray for the expiation of the sin of him, who, doubtless, must still be dear to you ; it would be the greatest means of bringing peace to your own mind you could make use of ; and besides, be a glorious pattern of virtue, thus fulfilling both the conjugal and fraternal duty.

It was without the least hesitation that Stenoclea assured her, she would gladly take her council in every particular, but seemed to entertain little hopes of prevailing for a pardon for Armuthi, on which Miramillia readily made her an offer of using what interest she had with the senate ; and indeed she so effectually made good her promise, that in a week's time she raised this afflicted lady from that extremity of despair she had been in, by obtaining the life of her dear husband. His pardon was signed, and he was released from prison ; but before he was so, Miramillia, who thought Stenoclea could not continue to live with him with honour, took care to remove her to a monastery. The distraction of Armuthi, when he found on what terms he was saved, being nothing material to the intent of this book, I shall not go about to describe ; therefore shall only say, that when all he could do had proved ineffectual to move Stenoclea from that resolution she had taken by the advice of Miramillia, and by the latter of these ladies been convinced, that he owed no less than such a self-denial to the memory of Barnibar, he followed the example of his wife, and with-

drew into a convent, where, among the society of the holy fathers, he was, in a little time, taught to despise the vanity of all sensual enjoyments, and to spend the days allotted him in this world, in preparations for a better. Stenoclea grew a great example of piety, and after their mutual conversion, there passed letters between them, which have been printed since their deaths, for the edification of others in piety and virtue.

Miramillia left them not till she had seen every article of her advice obeyed, and this solately unhappy pair in a fair way of being tranquil in their own minds; and looked upon as eminent examples of resolution and strength of virtue, by all who knew them or had heard their story.

But now having so happily finished this good work, her own misfortunes, and the memory of her dear son, made her begin again to think on the fortune-teller's prediction, and renew the search she had for some time neglected to serve the unfortunate Stenoclea.

She had in her youth commenced the most tender friendship for a beautiful lady, called Violathia, but both marrying, and removing into distant provinces, the care of their own families, joined to a set of new acquaintance, and a different turn in their affairs, had made them forgetful of each other. Miramillia had been told that she had been very unhappy in the unkindness of her husband for the first years of her marriage, but that her prudence  
since



since had made an alteration in his humour so much to her advantage, that he now adored and loved what before he had seemed to contemn and hate. She imagined that contentment could no where be so perfect as where misfortunes had been; nothing affording a more real satisfaction than to reflect on past miseries, when in a state of ease. To have overcome our woes endears the present joy; and having experienced what it is to be unhappy, we better know the value of the blessings we enjoy. To her, therefore, she resolved to go, confident that the friendship that had formerly been between them, would render her a welcome guest; and that the other would rejoice in an opportunity to serve her. But the castle in which she lived, being a great distance from Venice, it took her up some time in making preparations for her journey; and while things were getting ready for her departure, an adventure presented itself to her, which gave her hope she should have no need of leaving the city, or of making any farther enquiry.

She was one day at a window that looked into the street, and saw a coach, with the most glorious equipage that could be attending it, stop at her gate; she perceived a lady in it, but not having a full sight of her face, and the livery and arms being unknown to her, she was utterly at a loss from whom she was about to receive so grand a visit: nor was she out of her consternation, when a servant came into the

the room to inform her, that the Marchioness de Savilado, being told she now saw company, desired leave to wait on her. This was a name entirely a stranger to her ears; however, could not refuse admittance to a lady of that quality, though unknown to her; therefore ordered she should be immediately introduced. But infinite was her astonishment, when in the face of this high-titled lady, she found the features of Maria, the daughter of a person who had been a steward to her husband, and who had neither beauty nor wealth to compensate for the meanness of her birth, or any way to entitle her to expect the fortune she seemed now to be possessed of. The surprize she was in, as well as the uncertainty in what manner she should accost her, prevented her from speaking to her immediately; and the other guessing what her thoughts were, I doubt not, said she, with a gay air, but that your ladyship is prodigiously amazed to see the daughter of your steward exalted to a station so far above her hopes; but wit abundantly makes up for all other deficiencies; and if the rest of my sex, to that ambition which is inherent to the name of woman, had some share of my prudence, they might all become as happy as myself, and the mean part of mankind be compelled to live in an eternal celibacy. But, continued she, to ease your ladyship of all suspense, I will give you my history in as brief a manner as I can. My father, at his death, left me mistress of about a thousand crowns, which

which I very well knew could entitle me to no higher expectations than a pitiful mechanic, and my soul utterly disdaining those contemptible wretches, I laid out my whole stock of money in cloaths and jewels; the first of these, indeed, were truly rich, but the others were counterfeit; but so exactly resembling the right, both in their lustre, and the manner in which they were set, that they passed among very good judges for such as I would have them. I changed my name from Maria to Coquiana, and gave out that I was the daughter of a Hamborough merchant, from which place I pretended to have been lately arrived. I had a little understanding in the language, and had conversed with some people who came from thence, which enabled me to carry on my design the better. But I discoursed only in French, seeming altogether ignorant of Italian. The report of my vast fortune gained me a multitude of lovers, but I took care to encourage none, who I perceived were too cautious to marry me without being better assured, than they could be from my own mouth. The Marquis de Savilado being among the number of my admirers, I favoured his pretensions the most; because, as he was a stranger, and as much unknown in Venice as I pretended to be, he could have no opportunity of being informed of the truth of my affairs. In fine, madam, he, doubting not but I was the person I feigned to be, continued his applications; and it would

would have been madness in me to have acted a part too coy. I suffered myself to be won by his importunities; we were married, and I am now Marchioness de Savilado.

You have, indeed, had success in your designs, said Miramillia, but has your husband yet discovered the imposition? No, replied the other. The first endearments of our nuptials are yet hardly over, and I should be monstrously offended with him, if he should descend so low to think of sordid money, till by my appearing weary of the soft folly, he had permission to throw away an hour on business. It will be very much your interest then, resumed Miramillia, not to seem so too soon; for it is my opinion, that when he once gets leisure to examine the cheat you have put on him, you may bid adieu to all future demonstrations of his kindness. As for that, said she, I am perfectly at ease; it is altogether indifferent to me whether he loves or hates: I have gained my point, I am his wife; not all the laws of Venice can make me otherwise: I must, in spite of him, preserve my title, be a sharer in his fortune, keep up my equipage and state; and am better acquainted with the world, and the modes of it, than to give myself any pain about my husband's affection. Yet still, resumed Miramillia, there is much to be feared from that power, and I should tremble at the apprehensions of what private ill treatment I might meet with from a man so deceived, however his own character might oblige him  
to



to use me well before company. Oh, madam! cried the marchioness, you loved the man you married, but we, who consult our interest alone, can find so true a contentment in the gratification of that view, that we perceive no want of any other. Let the marquis fret as much as he pleases, at the disappointment of his expectations, while I know myself secure of mine, I shall but laugh at his want of penetration in the first place, which suffered him to be so easily imposed on; and at his philosophy in the next, which no better enables him to support his misfortunes. No, I defy fate and him to give me a moment's discontent: I am rich, great, and will be happy!

Miramillia could not forbear testifying some part of that disdain she conceived for a person of that humour, by shaking her head, and frowning several times while she was speaking; but afterwards reflecting that happiness was rather ideal than essential, and that whoever imagined themselves blessed, was so in fact, whatever opinion others might have of them; it struck into her head, that this vain, gay creature might have it more in her power to perform the piece of sempstrey she was so earnest to have accomplished, than those, who by thinking more deeply, had a more just sense of the instability of those joys which the world calls blessings. She therefore communicated to her the prediction of the fortune-teller, and the desire she had of putting it to the proof. You could not, replied the marchioness,

chioness, have mentioned this affair to any one in the world more capable of serving you than myself. I protest to you, I am so far from any disturbed emotions, that I believe not a possibility of any thing that now could disorder me, though for a moment. I will therefore undertake the work, and if there be any truth in this spell, depend on hearing, by any means, of your beloved son in a short time. I will defer the giving myself the pleasure of some visits, I intended to make, till another opportunity, and sit down early to-morrow morning on your work; which I assure you nothing shall take me from, till it be accomplished. Miramillia thanked her; and, after some conversation, the marchioness took her leave, and left the other more satisfied in her mind than she had been since the beginning of her search.

But it was not long permitted her to enjoy this contentment; some ladies of her acquaintance coming to visit her, about three or four days after that in which she had seen the marchioness, they told her, by way of entertainment, that a very pleasant discovery of a double imposition had lately been made, to the great diversion of the town; and then proceeded to relate, that a vain creature, of a mean birth and education, had set up for a woman of fortune, and, as such, was married to a man who pretended himself the Marquis de Savilado; but that within a week after the ceremony he was known by some people, who  
had

had seen him in another capacity, to have been all his life-time, since he was capable of service, the groom of that nobleman whose title he had taken up; that the relating of this being immediately spread, those several tradesmen, whose goods he had bought on the credit of his quality, came to demand their own again; that the fine house was stripped of all its furniture; and the sham-owner of those rich cloaths, which had for some time given him the appearance of a man of rank. That the bride, who having been left mistress of some fortune by her father, which she had laid out in equipping herself for this enterprize, was now compelled, by the threatenings and stripes of her husband, to turn into money the few valuable things she had, for his support.

This was enough to make Miramillia know she had been deceived in her expectations from this side; and therefore got every thing ready for her journey to Violathia's, with as much expedition as possible; and having accomplished all that was necessary for that purpose, set out with an equipage befitting her own quality, and the state of the person she was going to visit.

As she had never been accustomed to converse with any but those of the great world, no grandeur could be very surprising to her eyes, else would the magnificence she beheld about this lady have astonished her. The castle in which she lived, was situated in the most

most pleasant country she had ever seen ; two rows of stately pines formed a delightful road, as she passed up, by an easy ascent, to the top of a hill on which it stood : on either hand she perceived, through the trees, a thousand little cascades, which, emptying themselves into the vale beneath, seemed to feed the rivers, from which they were derived themselves, by secret conveyances and pipes under ground : four lofty towers built all of stone, and crowned with gilded pinnacles at a distance, pleased the sight, and added a vast grace to the noble structure they appeared to guard. The summit of the mountain gained, a number of statuary gods and heroes, placed on marble pedestals, with their right hands extended, pointed to the brazen gate, at which one of Miramillia's servants having knocked, the massy foldings were immediately thrown back by two servants in rich liveries ; and presently appeared several others, who being informed of the name and quality of the person who was come to be a guest, conducted her through a spacious hall, into a room adorned with curious hangings, fine paintings, and chrystal branches, each containing an hundred wax tapers, ready to supply the place of Phœbus, when he withdrew his beams to cheer some distant world. But she had scarce time to admire the excellent fancy and skill, in placing the ornaments of this stately parlour, before she saw the owner

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of



of them, the lovely Violathia, on a marble staircase, hasting to welcome her. Both run with open arms to meet each other, and by the tenderness of their embraces declared, the memory of their former friendship was far from being extinct on either side. Miramillia endeavoured to excuse her long absence; but the other assured her, that she had now repaired it by her presence, and that there was nothing could have afforded her so sincere a satisfaction as the sight of her. The first salutations being over, Violathia led her up stairs, where her husband, the Count Berosi, received her according to her quality, and as a person of whom she had heard his wife speak with the highest respect and love. There was no time for private conversation that night; but the next day, being left alone by the Count, who imagined they might have somewhat to say to each other, Miramillia, with a freedom becoming the former intimacy between them, began to question her concerning her affairs, and extol that prudence and sweetness of behaviour, which had wrought so wonderful an alteration in the behaviour of the Count, as to convert him from one of the worst of husbands to the best. I perceive, saith Violathia, the report of my adventures has reached Venice; and it is probable, that the consideration of his own character, more than my discretion, has obliged the Count to change his treatment of me. I hope, resumed Mira-

millia, that is not an article now to be disputed; the world will have it, that he adores you with greater ardour than the first bridal wishes could inspire; you certainly are the best judge whether they are sincere or not. That complaisance which the care of one's reputation obliges us to pay to a person united to us by marriage, has in it a constraint easily to be perceived, and is most shown in publick; but that which flows from the soul, and is indeed the effects of love, pours itself forth chiefly in privacy, when only the dear object is witness of what we say or do. But why should I attempt to expatiate on the difference between a real and enforced tenderness; Violathia is herself too good a judge to be deceived in a point which so nearly concerns her happiness; and if she pleases to put that confidence in me, can inform me if the satisfaction she enjoys is so great as it is said to be.

Violathia was some time before she made any answer to this demand, but when she did, it was in this manner. There is nothing, said she, which I dare not repose in Miramilia's breast, and heaven knows the need I have had of such a friend as you; how often I have wished to pour out all the secrets of my soul, and beg instructions from your wiser judgment for the regulation of my conduct. Oh! that you sooner had blessed me with your society. Your councils might then have averted what

now I 2 now

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now can never be recalled, and I might have indeed been as happy as the world believes. Then the false Count, interrupted Miramillia, is yet insensible of your worth, nor knows to prize the treasure he is master of? Ungrateful man! how much has fame deceived me? I came full charged with congratulations, but find condolences better suit your state, and the most keen reproaches his. Hold, noble lady! resumed the other, I dare not be unjust, whatever errors my unhappy circumstances may have involved me in. The Count repenting of his former treatment, behaves to me with tenderness unutterable. So dearly does he prize my peace, he seems to have no will but mine. My smiles make all his joy; my frowns his only care. Never was woman more ardently beloved and adored. Had he a world to lose, the example of Mark Antony would cease to create wonder, and Berossus be esteemed the greater prodigy of love; and Cleopatra's fame yield to the more prevailing force of Violathia's charms. Yes, he is kind as tender mothers to their new-born babes; studious to oblige, and fearful to offend, as if not his own sex, but mine, were ordained by heaven for rule. But, oh! too late has this conversion happened; the thousandth part of these endearments would once have made me the happiest of woman-kind, but now render me the most accursed.

A flood of tears here intercepted the passage of her words, and gave Miramillia leave

to resume her discourse, which she did in these terms.

Much have I heard, said she, of the ill usage you have received; but sure, methinks, she that could with so much patience support that cruelty, might, for her own sake, endeavour to lose the memory of it. Besides, remember, dearest Violathia, it is not in the power of the most erring mortal to offend us so much, as even the best of us offend daily the majesty of heaven; but yet does sincere repentance obtain mercy; and even the latest return to virtue, hope pardon for all past transgressions. Can you want sweetness then of disposition, to look on all atonements as too mean to expiate the wrongs you have received? Time is not to be recalled, nor can the Count do more to merit your forgiveness, than to dispose of all that is to come in such a manner as becomes his character.

I acknowledge the justice of your remonstrances, replied Violathia, I know too well to what I am bound, both by religion and good-nature, not to confess I am exceedingly to blame; and infinitely more so, than yet you have any notion of. Oh! my friend, continued she, leaning her head upon her shoulder, fain would I make you the partner of my most secret guilt; would lay open all my soul, but that I dread the virtue I revere; and fear to forfeit all that pity my mis-



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fortunes claim, when you shall know how far the weakness of my sex has swayed my reason, and undone my peace. It is not, Miramillia, that I hate Berosi, but myself, which renders all he can do to please me ineffectual, and I pardon from my soul his crimes, but cannot my own.

It was with an unspeakable surprize Miramillia heard these words, various and perplexed conjectures ran through her mind; which the other observing by the changes in her countenance, I doubt not, said she, but by what I have declared, you are not far from guessing the truth of my misfortune and my fault; and as the secret rages for vent within my troubled breast, to whom, with so much safety, can I reveal it, as to one whose discretion and forgiving tenderness, I am so well acquainted with? I will then relate the whole story of what has happened to me, since those blessed days, when free from care, we made no scruple of revealing to each other, each wish and innocent desire that rose in either of our souls. Pity the miseries I have since endured; and in charity believe, that had I been less unhappy, I had also been less guilty.

With too much severity do you judge yourself, replied Miramillia, to need to fear the censure of another: she that so nicely can distinguish between good and ill, can never wrong the dictates of her conscience  
in

in any superlative degree; and I am almost confident, you have done nothing I should not, with less difficulty, absolve you for, than you found in the committing it.

A deep sigh was all the reply Violathia made to these words, and perceiving the other expected the performance of her promise, she began it in this manner.



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*The History of VIOLATHIA, and the Counts  
BEROSI and CHARMILLO.*

AS you were married, said she, and removed to Venice some months before I had seen the Count Berosi, it may be necessary to inform you, that love had the least share in exciting me to this Hymen; but as I was unprepossessed with any impression in favour of another, I readily acquiesced to the will of my parents, who thought themselves happy in disposing of me to a man of his quality and vast possessions. After I became his wife, gratitude for the elevated station to which his love had raised me, made me regard him with the highest veneration; I thought I could never esteem too much a person who had done such great things for me; and this regard encreasing daily, would doubtless have ripened into the most tender affection, had he continued to give me proofs of his; but, alas! I had not yet brought into the world my first-born son, before the most unreasonable jealousy took possession of his soul; not the most intimate of his friends were exempted from his base suspicions, yet  
did

did not the tempest of his fury fall on them, but me. At first he told me, that he believed I was not guilty of wronging him in fact, but that he read my inclinations in my eyes, and knew I wanted but an opportunity to become as vile as prostitution could make a woman: he accused me of casting amorous glances on the young cavaliers who frequented his house, and if at any time I chanced to sigh (as his reproaches gave me but too just a cause) he would fly into the extremest rage, and swear I was then languishing for some one or other, whom he would name; for it was no single person for whom I was thus branded, but all, by turns, were alike censured, or rather I was so alike for all. I begged that he would permit me to keep my chamber whenever any visitors came to the castle, that by seeing no company I might put it out of his power to imagine I treated any of them with more regard than was consistent with his repose; but even this proof of my humility and resignation to his will, he interpreted as an effect of cunning, and that by excluding myself from all society but his, I had a desire to expose his jealousy to the world, and acquire compassion for the hard usage I received from him; in fine, I could say nothing, or do nothing, that was not misconstrued by his wild *passion*. How cruel a fate was this for a heart which studied nothing but to please him. With what streams of tears did I lament my unhappy state, and now in-



deed began to wish my lot had been cast otherwise; how much more blessed would a middle state of life have made me with some less ungenerous man, than all this pomp and grandeur condemned to bear upbraidings so unjust, and hourly taxed with a breach of that duty I had so religiously observed, that I call heaven to witness, that for three whole years I had no wish but to regain his affections and convince him that I was such as he desired I should be, nor in spite of his severities had once turned my eyes on any other object with delight.

But to return, I was in due time delivered of a son, and had great hopes that little image of himself would have wrought a change in his temper to my advantage; but, on the contrary, he grew more unkind; scarce was that dreadful rack of nature over, which draws pity from even the most obdurate hearts, when he came into the chamber, and ordering the woman who attended me to withdraw, accused me of having brought a spurious heir into his family, talked to me in a fashion which even the meanest man, if honest, would be ashamed of, branded me with the foulest names that tongue ever uttered, or the malicious heart of man had baseness to invent; and though I wept, and prayed him to forbear, avowed my innocence by all the imprecations I was able; all I could say or swear was vain, and he flung from me with unheard-of curses. This cruel  
usage

usage joined with the weakness of my condition, threw me in fits, which by all about me were judged to be fatal; yet did I not, in my intervals of sense, utter a word that could give any one a hint of the occasion: though this patience I ascribe not to the tenderness I retained for his character, but my own; I was ashamed the world should know I had been so much as suspected of so foul a crime as that he charged me with, and chose rather to die in silence than reveal his crime and my misfortune. It is plain, however, that he desired not my death, by sending for the best physicians the country afforded, and promising them immense rewards if I recovered. Their care and skill, indeed, availed me much; but I believe had not been effectual enough to have restored me, had not the relenting Berosi come to my bedside, and, on his knees, conjured me to live, and to forgive the rashness of his impatient jealousy, which he said had been occasioned only by an excess of love, and the fears of losing any part of that affection he esteemed so precious; he closed these assurances by the most solemn protestations never to suspect my virtue more. This conversion (which I then believed sincere) gave me so perfect a pleasure, that I know not if in my whole life I ever felt the like; I kissed his hands, and vowed to him (heaven knows with the utmost truth) that this kind return to the good opinion he once had of me, had more than recompensed the

cruelty of his late mistake. He seemed entirely satisfied with my forgiveness, embraced me tenderly, and withdrew. After this my distemper abated by such swift degrees, that at the next visit the physicians made me, they gave their judgment that I was out of danger: but, see! the strange caprices of this self-tormented husband, he no sooner perceived I was recovering, than he relapsed into his former jealousies. He alledged, that I had but dissembled those agonies, to make me appear innocent; he plainly told me, that had I been really so, I could not so easily have been brought to pardon his suspicions, and renewed his reproaches in the same or more opprobrious language than before, nay, to such a height did the violence of his temper transport him, that he would not suffer the ceremony of baptism to the infant to be performed in his own house; now making no scruple to declare before all the servants, that he knew it not to be his, and would permit no base-born child to receive a name under his roof. O Miramillia! what a shock was this! nothing can be more amazing to me, than that I lived to endure it; would to God I had not; how much more happy had I been to have fallen a martyr to the unjust suspicions of a cruel husband, than to have lived to wrong a kind, a truly tender one. I was compelled to send the injured babe to receive his initiation into the Christian church, and afterwards he brought up in the house of a poor woman in  
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the neighbourhood, none of the Count's relations daring to accept the charge, and mine were at too great a distance. Thus was the heir of a great title and estate thrust in his helpless infancy from his father's doors, and robbed of the fond care of an indulgent but unhappy mother. With what anguish I parted from him, what inexpressible horrors rent my bleeding heart at this separation from so dear a part of myself, none but a mother can conceive. Yet did not this sacrifice appease the restless rage of my then inhuman husband; he pitied not my tears, nor had the least compassion for the overwhelming griefs with which I was oppressed. He talked of nothing but being divorced from me; and I was compelled to endure the worst of treatment from him, without seeming to repine, lest my complaints should more provoke him to put that cruel design in execution; not that I was mean-spirited enough to content myself with submitting to such usage for any mercenary consideration, but the hopes that my persevering in my duty would one day open his eyes to my innocence, and make him take into his care and protection my dear child, enabled me to support all the barbarities he could inflict on me.

Nor was I always without seeing some success of my designs; many months were not elapsed before he again appeared moved with my afflictions, again entreated my forgiveness, and obtained, if on condition he would



would restore my son to my embraces, and acknowledge him for what he was, his own. He complied, and I was flattered with a short-lived happiness in the recovered kindness of my husband, and presence of my son; but, oh! I enjoyed not so many days of pleasure as I had known months of grief; soon his distracted jealousies returned, and with it my ill usage; I was again with child, and he renewed his former base suspicions. But why should I trouble you with relating the particulars of his behaviour, which were but so many repetitions of what before I suffered; it shall suffice to tell you, that for three whole years I bore barbarities, which if I should publish, would scarce gain credit from those who saw them not; I bore them without contesting with my fate; and for the sake of those dear innocents, to whom I was a mother, submitted myself to every thing which I could think would soften him enough to make him own himself a father. But what avails my boasted patience? what! though for a time I persevered in the strictest paths of virtue, if I at last fled from them, and had recourse to remedies unwarrantable for ease, or for revenge? Among the rest of the cruelties he practised on me, he would sometimee start from his midnight sleep, and rousing me from mine, with a drawn sword uplifted at my breast, compel me to forsake my bed, and drive me out naked, and shivering betwixt cold and fear, to pass the remainder of the night in  
yonder

yonder marble portico, with the most outrageous threats deterring my maids from bringing a nightgown to me, or any other covering to shelter my weak trembling limbs from the inclement air. One of those dismal nights, as I was casting up my eyes to heaven, bewailing my misfortunes, a little arrow, such as children play with, fell at my feet; I felt the unhurtful touch, and much amazed, and wondering whence it came, took it up, and found a paper fixed to it, which, plucking off, I found directed to myself, and by the light of the moon, which then shone extremely bright, I read in it these lines :

“ **W**HEN beauty and distresses, such as  
 “ yours, demand the assistance of  
 “ superior powers, the brightest, most adored  
 “ among them, must vouchsafe it: the God  
 “ of love, burning with shame and rage to  
 “ see his altars thus profaned by your injuri-  
 “ ous husband, offers you a champion to re-  
 “ dress your wrongs; too much your suffer-  
 “ ing virtue has endured, nor ought you to  
 “ submit longer to a treatment so unworthy,  
 “ and which, as it has destroyed your peace,  
 “ will also, in a short time, your life; quit  
 “ then the house and bed of that ungrateful  
 “ man, and find protection in more faithful  
 “ arms: long have I been an admirer of your  
 “ beauty, but am now become an adorer of  
 “ that noble fortitude with which you have  
 “ sustained indignities, it would have render-  
 “ ed

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" ed desperate any other woman: I am  
 " enough acquainted with your affairs to  
 " know the Count daily threatens you with  
 " a divorce; oh, take him at his word!  
 " make known his cruelties, and be the first  
 " complainer; believe me, that a man of  
 " equal quality with him, and looked on as  
 " not his inferior, either in personal or ac-  
 " quired accomplishments, would hazard life  
 " to become master of that glorious title  
 " which he so unworthily possesses; think  
 " also that the advice I give you is not only  
 " the effect of a self-interested passion, but  
 " the general voice of all who are not stran-  
 " gers to your merits, and the ungenerous  
 " treatment of the cruel Count; be assured  
 " I prize your ease more, oh, infinitely more,  
 " than my own happiness; or rather, it is  
 " your ease can only make my happiness;  
 " guess at the respect I pay you, when I am  
 " now near enough to feast my eager sight  
 " with a full view of those excellencies I lan-  
 " guish for, yet deny myself so immense a ble-  
 " ssing, and fearful to offend by any presuming  
 " action, send this faithful messenger of my  
 " heart to entreat you to have compassion  
 " on yourself, which, if you do, you shall  
 " hear no farther of my passion till the law  
 " shall put you in a condition to receive the  
 " declarations I shall make with honour;  
 " but once more conjure you no longer to  
 " subject yourself to insults such as this,  
 " which might have given a less respectful  
 " lover

“lover the opportunity of discovering his  
 “desires in a manner very different than  
 “shall ever be made use of by

“The divine VIOLATHIA’S

“Most sincere

“Though unknown adorer.”

“P. S. As all my cares are for your hap-  
 “piness, I entreat you will be so kind to my  
 “impatience, as to let me know if I may  
 “hope to see you in a better state, and if I  
 “can any way be conducive to make you  
 “so. Once more permit me to assure you,  
 “that though I feel for you a passion as infi-  
 “nite as your own charms, I will never be pre-  
 “suming enough to plead any merit for your  
 “services, when freed from this ungrateful  
 “man who now possesses you; you will still  
 “be at full liberty to dispose yourself to him,  
 “who, among the multitude of your adorers,  
 “shall seem most deserving; command then  
 “my life and fortune without reserve; the  
 “glory of your acceptance, without any far-  
 “ther recompence, will make me blessed.  
 “There is a small hollow in the farthestmost  
 “of the four elms opposite your garden-gate;  
 “be pleased to leave a note there, which will  
 “be the determination of my fate in your re-  
 “solve.”

Impossible



Impossible would it be, continued Viola-thia, to describe to you the various tumults of my disordered soul at an adventure so astonishing; womanish curiosity would perhaps have led me down the stairs which led to the garden, for from that place I was sensible the arrow must be sent, but the consideration of the posture I was in, naked almost, prevented me, and modesty stood me in greater stead at that time than discretion; and impatient as I was to know from whom, and by what means I had received that letter, the fear of being exposed in a manner so indecent, made me shrink back into the *portico*, and stand as close as I could; till at the approach of day I was relieved by my inhuman husband, and permitted to return to bed; who having gratified his spleen, said nothing to hinder me from sleeping, if the perplexities of my mind would have given me leave: but I had now perturbations of a different kind than those to which I had been accustomed. I had concealed the letter under my night-cloaths with my hair, (which was the only place I had to put it in) and longed for the Count's rising, that I might examine it more heedfully than I could do by the uncertain glimmerings of the moon. I was not long without the gratification of this wish; Berosi forsook his bed soon after I came into it, and I had full liberty to consider the contents of that fatal paper to which I owe all the misfortunes I am now overwhelmed with; the oftner I read it over,

over, the more I was persuaded of the honour of him that wrote it, and though I could form no guess who it was, my soul became insensibly ensnared with an esteem and tenderness for this Unknown. The cruel treatment of Berosi seemed more insupportable than ever, and the remembrance of the tenderness which sometimes I received from him, rather odious than any way endearing; in fine, from this moment I began to hate him, and to entertain sentiments which not all his barbarity could make me do before. My children's interest seemed now of less weight with me than my own ease; self-preservation now reminded me of the evident danger my life was every day exposed to by his wild fury, and having an inclination to part, soon found arguments to prove there was a necessity of doing so. I was, however, for some hours in a debate within myself if I should answer the letter which had been the chief motive of inspiring me with this resolution; I feared it would be a breach of that reserve I had hitherto so carefully observed, and could not consent to be guilty of any thing which might hereafter be censured as an indecorum, but then again I thought there appeared so much honour and respect in the declaration he had made, and his forbearing to approach me when he was so near, at a time when it was not consistent with my modesty, deserved my utmost acknowledgments. It was by this last suggestion I was swayed; and as soon as I was

was up, I retired to my closet, and wrote in this manner.

*" To the generous Unknown.*

" **I**T is no inconsiderable addition to the  
 " misfortunes I labour under through the  
 " unkindness of Berosi, that he makes no  
 " secret of it to the world; gladly would I  
 " conceal his guilt if there was a possibility  
 " for my doing so; but he seems to take a  
 " pride in proclaiming the cruel use he makes  
 " of that power the law has given him over  
 " me, and laughs at the unavailing pity of  
 " the less barbarous part of mankind. I  
 " have frequently received the same advice  
 " from others as I have done from you, but  
 " the consideration of my children's interest  
 " has hitherto prevented me from taking it.  
 " How long I shall be able to sustain the  
 " weight of those woes with which I am op-  
 " pressed, I know not; but hope, that since  
 " the almighty disposer of all things thinks  
 " fit they should be inflicted on me, he will  
 " also enable me to bear them, or find some  
 " way for my relief, without any guilt, for  
 " so I should think to join with a stranger  
 " in any design against my husband, how un-  
 " worthy soever he is. If he sues for a di-  
 " vorce, I shall make no opposition to his  
 " intent; but cannot answer it to my duty,  
 " to be the first who desires it; though I  
 " blush to think to what inconveniencies his  
 " " madness

"madness last night might have exposed me.  
 "I cannot omit paying you those grateful  
 "acknowledgments which are your due; be  
 "assured your behaviour has inspired me with  
 "the highest opinion of your virtue and your  
 "honour, and that as a man of those princi-  
 "ples I very much esteem you; but you must  
 "remain satisfied with this, without reveal-  
 "ing yourself farther, because though, per-  
 "haps, I should be well enough pleased to  
 "know to whom I am so greatly obliged, I  
 "should not dare to entertain those senti-  
 "ments of you when acquainted with your  
 "person, as I now do with safety, while ad-  
 "miring only the perfections of your mind,  
 "those ideas of you which now are inno-  
 "cent, would then be criminal; leave me  
 "then to my unhappy fate, and think but  
 "with compassion on

"The suffering, &c."

I subscribed not my name, for fear of any  
 accident which might betray what I had writ-  
 ten to Berosi, and disguised my hand in such  
 a manner, that had he seen it, though the con-  
 tents might make it known to be written by  
 no other, yet the difference of characters  
 might render it liable to suspicion of forgery;  
 but I need not have taken this caution; the  
 person who expected it was too industrious  
 to suffer it to be seized by any hand but his  
 own. I must confess my curiosity so far pre-  
 vailed



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ailed on me, that in spite of what I pretended in my letter, I would very fain have loitered about the place to see who would come to take it from the oak; but the fears of being observed by Berosi, or some one who should inform him, made me glad to retire into the house the moment I had deposited it in the appointed concave, and I was compelled to remain in ignorance of the person to whom I thought myself so much obliged. But how much did it add to the amazement of the foregoing day, when early the next morning I found on my toilet, as I was about to comb my head, a letter directed to me in the same hand as the former; the surprize I was in did not, however, hinder me from having presence of mind enough to order my woman, who was then waiting behind my chair, to withdraw; and full of impatience to see what it contained, broke the seal, and read the following lines:

*"To the divinest but most wrongest of Women,  
"the never-too-much adored VIOLATHIA.*

*"THAT* admirable tenderness you still  
*"retain for the character of Berosi is  
 "no less to be wondered at than your other  
 "virtues; but consider, fair angel! that there  
 "is a justice to be done to one's self, which  
 "ought not to be dispensed with, though  
 "conjugal affection is recommended to us  
 "by the decrees of heaven and earth, yet  
 "neither*

“ neither of them means, that when either  
 “ of the persons so united breaks, by injustice  
 “ or cruelty, those sacred ties, the other should  
 “ fall a martyr of an unavailing patience and  
 “ resignation, is not yourself treated in the most  
 “ inhuman manner? Are not those dear chil-  
 “ dren, which ought to be the precious pledges  
 “ of an inviolable tenderness, shut from the  
 “ favour of their barbarous father, refused  
 “ to bear his name, and daily threatened to  
 “ be made aliens to his house? Can you bear  
 “ this? Does religion or morality command  
 “ you to do it? No, the one bids you disdain  
 “ all commerce with a man who daily affronts  
 “ heaven in the person of its most perfect re-  
 “ semblance; and the other is far from in-  
 “ joining you to continue in a state which  
 “ subjects you only to insults. Depend upon  
 “ it, you cannot long support with life the  
 “ hardships inflicted on you; and can you  
 “ think it no crime to join in your own mur-  
 “ der? Oh! have compassion on yourself, it  
 “ is all I ask. Whatever are my sufferings,  
 “ I shall contentedly bear them when I see  
 “ yours removed; and as a proof how much  
 “ my very will is confined to your disposal, I  
 “ still, in obedience to your commands, for-  
 “ bear any more of what I am, than that I  
 “ must ever be

“ The excellent VIOLATHIA’S

“ Devoted Slave.”

“ P. S. If

“ P. S. If in recompence to my disinterest-  
 “ ed zeal to serve you, you are so good as to  
 “ favour me with a second testimony, that  
 “ you pardon the presumption of my advice,  
 “ let the kind oak be again the receptacle of  
 “ my happiness. Once more adieu, too  
 “ charming enemy of your own peace, and  
 “ destroyer of that of your adorer.”

Judge, Miramillia, pursued she, how much I was amazed at receiving a letter in this manner; it was impossible it could be, unless the person who wrote it were himself in the house; or had made some one of the family his confident in the affair; the first was an absurdity to think on, and I was so angry at his having subjected me to the discretion of a servant, who, out of interest or revenge for any little peevishness of mine, might betray what had passed to Berosi, that for some moments it destroyed all the esteem which the respect of his behaviour in other things had inspired me with; and my virtue at the same time reminding me, that whatever was the conduct of my husband, mine was equally blameable in holding any kind of correspondence with a man who professed a passion for me, I resolved to put an end to it at once, and not by allowing myself in small liberties, run the hazard of falling into greater. In this mind I sat down to write, and immediately answered him in words like these.

“ T.

*" To the too-busy Unknown.*

" **F**OR such I must term the man who  
" pries into secrets to which he is not  
" called to be a partaker, nor can have any  
" justifiable concern in. If I thought fit to  
" quit the house of my husband, I know in  
" what manner to do it without your advice,  
" and have too many relations to stand in  
" need of the assistance of a stranger, especially  
" a person who, whatever he pretends,  
" can neither be a friend to my honour or my  
" reputation, when, to favour his correspondence  
" with me, he makes use of the corruption of my  
" servants. What assurance  
" can you have that the same mercenary view,  
" which engaged the delivery of your letter,  
" might not also occasion the discovery of it to  
" Count Berosi? Or how I be secure, that my  
" having concealed the receipt of it, may not  
" one day be brought against me as a proof  
" that I deserved, in some measure, that usage  
" I have met with from his jealousy? If any  
" part of that esteem you have professed for me  
" be sincere, write to me no more; conscientious  
" innocence and a steady adherence to  
" virtue has hitherto consoled me in my mis-  
" fortunes, if deprived of them, I should indeed  
" be wretched; seek not therefore to undo  
" me more by any offers of service, which I  
" neither want, nor will accept. This is the  
" only obligation in your power to confer on

K

" her



“ her who desires to be for ever to your worth,  
 “ your person, and your name,

“ A Stranger.”

The first moment I had an opportunity I conveyed this into the oak, and was so far satisfied in my mind, that I had done what became a woman of virtue, and who desired to continue so; but could not get over the perplexity I was in of knowing to which of my servants this adventurous lover had discovered himself: I remembered to have seen three or four of the maids in my dressing-room the morning I had received the letter; I knew also that the groom of the chamber had been there, as was his custom, before I came into it; my pages were continually running in and out, it was therefore impossible to form any direct guess among such a number; all I could be sure of was, that it was one of them: and this made me in so ill a humour to all, that doubtless every one but the guilty person was very much surprized at such a change in my behaviour.

About this time my husband became acquainted with a young nobleman, called Count Charmillo; and as his unaccountable suspicions of my behaviour never vented themselves on any but me, he debarred not even those with whom he most reproached me, from the utmost freedom of access to his house. On the contrary, he took pleasure in show-

showing me to them; would load me with praises in publick, which I was as far from deserving as I was from the secret upbraidings with which he persecuted me whenever we were alone. He had no sooner commenced an acquaintance with Count Charmillo, than he brought him to visit me, and sure one would have thought, had he been really as jealous as he appeared, he would have taken all imaginable care to have prevented me from seeing a form so love-inspiring, so adorned with every qualification necessary to create wonder and esteem; not that I was ever liable to receive any great impression from the exterior charms of any person, but there was something so infinitely engaging in his conversation, as by degrees stole on my soul, and filled it with emotions, till then unknown. I thought I could have listened to his words for ever, and the pleasure I took in hearing him, brought me insensibly to take a delight also in viewing him; I saw him take his leave with *pain*, and wished for nothing more than his return; in fine, Miramillia, I was in love with him without knowing I was so; insensible of my danger, I provoked it, and ignorant that I was guilty of a crime, indulged it: my husband seemed as much charmed with him as I was; and what I extremely wondered at, never reproached me on his account, as he had done on almost all others with whom I was acquainted: had he given me the least hint that he imagined I looked on this young nobleman

with eyes too open to his merits, it would doubtless have awaked me to an examination of myself, and finding his suspicions just, might, perhaps, have enabled my resolution to have got the better over inclination; but, alas! the only one for whom he ever had cause to distrust my love or virtue, was the only one of whom he was not jealous, notwithstanding his visits were very frequent; and he behaved himself to me in a manner, which, at another time, would have made him transgress all the bounds of discretion or good nature in his treatment of me.

But, oh! I saw not into the true cause of so unusual a temperance; it was not that he thought it not in the power of Count Charmillo to inspire the uttermost tenderness, but he thought himself now convinced, that I was capable of feeling it for no other than himself. The unwearied patience and humility, with which I had endured the greatest cruelties from him for so long a time, made my virtue and my love appear in colours so advantageous to him, that he accused himself as a monster of barbarity for his past actions, resolving never to repeat them; and to make, by his future kindness to me, all the reparation it was possible for him to do, for his former cruelty; but either ashamed of confessing himself to have been guilty of an error, or not yet absolutely determined it was so, he gave me no other testimonies of his change, than by not renewing any of those indignities or severities, which had rendered

rendered my life so very unhappy. As all the accusations, however, which he had loaded me with had been unjust, I doubted not, but on the first fit of spleen which seized him, I should be the object on whom his ill humour was to fall; and was so far from imagining what heaven had been doing for me, that I had ceased to expect any alteration in him to my advantage: and, oh! I now began to wish it too; all that regard, that tenderness, which the consideration of my duty had inspired me with, and which it had ever been a maxim with me, that no ill usage ought to erase, was now banished from my soul. I was grown careless in all attempts to please him; no longer made any efforts to regain his affection, or convince him of the reality of mine; and wholly taken up with the image of Charmillo, looked on every thing that interrupted that delightful employment, as an enemy to my repose. Whole days would I sit alone, and entertain myself with discoursing with him in idea. I would recall time, return to the days of my virgin state, represent him as a lover, who had done the most obliging and generous actions, to prove the sincerity of his passions; dictate a thousand ardent declarations on his side, and replies on mine; form little tender quarrels, and transporting reconciliations; all, all the romantick chimeras that the soft frenzy can inspire, in the deluded mind, formed my reflections, destroyed my virtue, and left me all a prey to folly and to ruin. Oh! let the



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name of *love* with *madness* be united ever; who separate them, confound ideas, which in themselves are one. What else, oh tell me, Miramillia! what else but a total deprivation of my reason could have subjected me to sentiments such as I have described? I, who, till that fatal time, had never entertained a friendship, even for a person of my own sex, without a thorough examination into the real deserts of her I was inclined to esteem; now devoted my whole soul, where neither affinity nor obligation demanded such a sacrifice: to one whose principles I was wholly unacquainted with; to one almost a stranger to me; was ever infatuation like to mine? Did ever woman, so strictly educated in the rudiments of virtue, and so nicely observant of them, fall all at once on so slender a temptation? But, continued she, wiping away some tears which the remembrance of past transactions drew into her eyes, I too long detain your attention by these fruitless exclamations, which will not in the least alleviate my crime, though they may excite your pity.

Count Berosi having rose one morning to go a hunting [his favourite diversion] long before the time in which I was accustomed to leave my bed; the images which possessed my waking moments, engrossed also those of my repose; even my shut senses could not exclude Charmillo; my soul beheld him, discoursed with him, discovered charms in him exceeding all I had before observed; a thousand

sand indistinct ideas, but all on him, ran in  
 my giddy fancy, but at last formed themselves  
 to one, which seemed a vision more than a dream.  
 Methought, I had received a letter from that  
*unknown admirer*, of whom I spoke before ;  
 and that going to the oak to leave a little bil-  
 let in answer to it, the narrow concave which  
 used to be the repository, on my approach,  
 extended itself ; and the whole cleaving trunk  
 at length opening a mighty passage, Char-  
 millo, dressed like a bridegroom, and adorned  
 with all the graces of art and nature, came  
 rushing forth, and caught me in his arms,  
 crying, Behold, sweet Violathia, your *un-  
 known adorer* ! No longer could I keep the  
 burning secret, nor feed on the unsubstantial  
 bliss of distant conversation. Something more  
 the lovely phantom seemed to say, but what I  
 know not. The vast confusion broke the  
 bonds of sleep ; I started, and awoke. Oh  
 that I had not ; that all that followed had been  
 indeed a dream, and but the guilt of fancy :  
 but, oh ! I waked too sure ; waked to sleep  
 no more in innocence or peace. The first  
 object of my opening eyes, was him who  
 had been the inspirer of my sleeping medi-  
 tations, the too-charming Count ; the hurry  
 of my spirits, between the illusion and reali-  
 ty, left me not the power of reflection ; yet  
 still I thought it all a dream, and would have  
 rose and shook the slumber off, but was too  
 forcibly with-held ; his arms close circled  
 round my waste, overpowered my vain ef-

forts, as did his enchanting tongue, and my own ungovernable emotions, in a few moments, even my very will. Though certain, said he, to incur your hatred (the greatest curse this world can give) it is not in my power to quit the blessing this opportunity affords. Long have I adored you at an humble distance; long waited the happy moment, to declare myself in such a manner, as you without a blush might have received; but not all the insults you received from the ungrateful Berosi, not all the entreaties of the most faithful lover, could prevail on you to free yourself from that bad man; and self-preservation is the first great law of nature. I could not live without you; and to obtain you, found this the only means: oh, pardon it; and believe, that though my passion has presumed thus far, it never could have done so, had not despair enforced it. Heavens! cried I, now well assured of the truth of all that had befallen me, what mean you by entreaties? Or what wild chimera would you form to justify a behaviour so unworthy? Forbear, replied he, divinest Violathia, to accuse a flame which knows not a dishonourable thought; but to make plain the mystery it was from me, that you received those two letters, subscribed your *unknown adorer*. I saw you at the chapel, was immediately seized with a passion, which I doubt not but it is common with you to inspire. I inquired who you were; was told, to my inexpressible grief, that you were married;

ried ; and, at the same time, of the ill treatment you received from the ungenerous Berosi ; fired with the desire of serving you, I found means to gain to my interest one about you, who informed me of the unexampled barbarity, with which you sometimes were driven from his bed, and exposed to the midnight air ; I prevailed so far as to be admitted into your garden, in which I passed many nights before my eyes were witnesses of the truths I had heard. I saw you, oh divinest Violathia ! and how hard it was for me to forbear, that moment, seizing your shivering beauties, and carrying you, perforce, from such a scene of cruelty and injustice ; but I feared to terrify where I would only honour ; and as I had before resolved, sent a winged messenger to acquaint you with the secrets of my soul. I saw you read the happy mandate ; stood gazing on your charms, till the declining moon deprived me of the joy ; and also rendered it unsafe for your honour, or myself, that I should continue longer there. After that I wrote ; but, oh ! how cruel was the answer I received ! Unable to live without your presence, I commenced an acquaintance with Berosi, which, till then, I had shunned. What followed would be impossible to express ; if I before admired and loved, I now adored those perfections, which a distance had so much captivated me ; when near approached, improved the passion to so violent a degree, that it became past re-

garden

K 5

restraint.



straint. No longer flattered with the charming hope of addressing you in that manner I wished, I had not the power to avoid making known my passion, by such means as you and fortune would permit. The latter has favoured me thus far; and if the adorable Violathia is, in reality, possessed of any share of that divine clemency, with which her eyes are so abundantly stored, she will forgive the last resource of desperate dying love.

It was in these, or the like terms, I heard the riddle of my fate explained; but how shall I confess to you, that I was utterly unable to answer it as I ought; surprize, and love, and even my very modesty, conspired against my virtue. Shame, for what he had done, took part with the other passions, to deprive me of the means of preventing him from doing more. Scarce know I what I said, or thought, or did; but this I am too certain of, that he entirely accomplished his intent, and made me in reality as wretched as he seemed blessed. I discovered not immediately, however, that I was so accursed; the same all-powerful wit which had undone me, had also the power to make me satisfied with ruin; and still continuing to assure me, by the most tender and solemn protestations imaginable, that all his desires tended to making me his wife; I gave him my faithful promise that I would write, with all possible speed, to my relations, and omit  
nothing

nothing which might procure a divorce from Berofi; obliged him to let me know to which of my servants he was indebted, for the triumph he had gained over me; which, when he had made me swear to forgive, he acquainted me, was my chief woman, or rather my companion; for so great an opinion had I of her virtue, integrity, and good sense, that I treated her as no other.

By her contriving, we had afterwards many pleasingly-guilty interviews; nor did I yet check myself for the condescensions I made him; resolving, on the first opportunity Berofi's ill usage should give me, to sue for a divorce, and authorize by marriage with the other joys we had but antedated. Much less had I been accustomed to dread the jealous barbarity of my husband than now I wished it. I no longer studied to oblige him; no more appeared the submissive and obedient wife; I trembled not at his frowns, nor took pleasure in his smiles; a careless indifference and sullen coldness sat on my brow whenever he behaved with tenderness; and on the least unkindness flew into reproaches. But little did I imagine the alteration of his humour, that behaviour which would once have driven him into the extremest rage, seemed now only to grieve him; and as I was one day in a very deep reflection on so unexpected, and now indeed, so undesired a change; he came to me, and pressing one of my hands tenderly between his, I have

something, my dearest Violathia, to communicate to you, said he, but shame, or pride, has hitherto deprived me of the power. Nothing is more difficult than to acknowledge we have done amiss; yet, without submission, ought not, nor cannot expect to be forgiven; I have wronged you, imposed upon your gentle nature; deformed by causeless jealousies the purity of my affection, and insulted yours; too much neglected the tender duties of a husband and a father, and compelled you to endure more than a wife or mother ought. I see the folly and injustice of my conduct, and have but one excuse to make for all I have done. I love you with that excess of passion, that till convinced of yours, by that inimitable patience, with which you have endured a treatment so unworthy of your charms; I could not think so vast a happiness, as the entire possession of your mind and body, could possibly be decreed for me. But, oh! I have too long been thankless for the joys, which heaven and you descend to bless me with. I repent, and am ashamed of my past follies; the whole study of my future life, shall be to expiate the sins I have been guilty of to you, and those dear pledges of our mutual love: speak, continued he, perceiving I was silent; can you forgive, Violathia?

O Miramillia, said the fair historian, a dagger drinking my vital blood had been less terrible than these words: such a return to love,

love, so soft a sensibility of the wrongs he had done me, would once have made me the happiest of my sex, now rendered me the most miserable; confusion, shame, and conscious guilt, overspread my mind: I could not answer, I trembled and grew pale, and red by turns, according as the different emotions worked within me! Diffimulation had ever been a stranger to my soul, and my present disorders left me not the power to study it; a flood of tears at last forcing their passage through my eyes, gave me some little ease, and gave Berosi, who was now as much disposed to believe good of me as ever he had been the contrary, leave to imagine the perturbations which had been so visible in me, were occasioned by no more than the sudden rush of unexpected joy his declaration had overwhelmed me with; and taking me in his arms, Thou loveliest, dearest of thy sex, said he, how could I ever suspect thy innocence, thy purity, and truth? Thy very resentments are more tender than the endearments of any other woman; but suppress the gentle heavings, which surprize, and too much regard for an unworthy man, has raised in thy dear breast: Never, never, will I offend thee more; speak then, and smiling say, thou pardonest me. With infinite difficulty I forced myself at last to bring out these words: All your cruelties, answered I, had my forgiveness even at the time you acted them, much less can I refuse it in your conversion. I had



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had added something more, but could not; this was however sufficient to satisfy him, and he resumed his discourse with so many expressions of remorse for his past behaviour, and assurances of an eternal confidence in me for the future, that I had not the least cause to doubt the sincerity of what he said. This acknowledgment a few weeks sooner would have been returned by me with the most ardent transports, but, in spite of my utmost efforts, all I could say to him now on that head were faint and languid, and but to aim at doing any thing which might make him think I took a pleasure in his change, was a pain to me, which was almost insupportable: happily for me, some company came to visit him, and prevented our conversation, till a time in which I should be better prepared to continue it.

The persons who entered being gentlemen, I left the Count to entertain them; glad of this opportunity to retire to my chamber, where I might reflect without interruption on this adventure. It was now impossible for me to think of a divorce, and that consideration reminding me that I ought not to continue any farther conversation with Charmillo, was something so terrible, that nothing but a mind under the same wretched circumstances can have any notion of. Never did any heart labour under anxieties equal to mine, vain would I have recalled my former tenderness for Berosi, vain have banished that I had  
had

had lately entertained for Charmillo; but O! I strove in vain, I could feel only a faint regard, a kind of pity for the one, nor for the other less than all that can be conceived of the most extravagant passion, yet conscious of my crime, ashamed of my weakness, and full of strong desires to return to virtue; the various agitations seemed to rend my very soul. After an infinity of strugglings, of reluctance, of confused and distracted schemes, at last I found a resolution becoming the character I bore, and the virtue of which I wished to prove myself a mistress; it was to write to Count Charmillo never to see me more; and lest the reflections of a softer moment might destroy the determination of this, I took pen and paper and writ to him in this manner.

“ *To Count CHARMILLO.*

“ **T**HAT emissary, by whose means  
 “ you have been so well made ac-  
 “ quainted with the secrets of our fami-  
 “ ly, can now inform you of the good  
 “ agreement between Count Berosi and my-  
 “ self, which putting an end to all thoughts  
 “ of a divorce, I need not tell you how con-  
 “ trary it would be to all that can be called  
 “ virtue, ever to see you more: I hope you  
 “ have too much honour to desire it; not to  
 “ desire it, did I say? alas! that would be  
 “ an impossibility to love, such as you profess:  
 “ but I conjure you even by that love, and  
 “ join the power you say I have over you, to  
 “ command

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“ command you never to attempt it. I am  
 “ enough unhappy in what has past, seek  
 “ not to make me more so, by bringing into  
 “ my sight a person whom I cannot look on  
 “ without a mixture of despair, remorse, and  
 “ guilty tenderness. Shun me for ever, in  
 “ pity to my peace, and that you may pre-  
 “ serve that character of honour which first  
 “ induced me to listen to your suit ; cease to  
 “ endeavour any future intimacies with her  
 “ whose breach of virtue it is now impossible  
 “ for you ever to make up, and the business  
 “ of whose whole future life must be to atone  
 “ the errors of the past. O Charmillo !  
 “ happy might I now be, had I never seen  
 “ you, or, seeing, been insensible of your  
 “ merits ; but this is a theme I dare not dwell  
 “ upon, lest I grow guilty in idea, and drive  
 “ you hence in vain. Farewell. I expect no  
 “ answer to this, I would have you grant my  
 “ request without telling me that you will  
 “ do so ; an eternal silence will become you  
 “ best, and can alone prevent from an in-  
 “ crease of wretchedness the

“ Undone VIOLATHIA.”

I thought I had done wonders in writing  
 this letter, and indeed the force I put on my-  
 self in doing it, could testify nothing less than  
 the most strenuous desire to return to virtue.  
 I gave it to Scrintha, that maid whom the infi-  
 nuations and bribes of Charmillo had prevailed

on

on to betray me, and with a frowning countenance commanded her to deliver it into his hands. Never did I see amazement more lively painted than in the face of this creature ; but whatever were her thoughts, she perceived I was not in a humour to listen to any thing she said, and therefore forbore making answer.

When the company that came to visit the Count had taken their leave, that now repenting husband renewed his endearments in so tender a manner, that the remorse I felt for having injured him, gave me a pain infinitely more exquisite than all the grief I had sustained for his unkindness. O the difference between innocence and guilt, and how much better had it been for me to have died in the one, though despised and hated, my virtue known to heaven and myself alone, than to have lived beloved and honoured, wanting that innate happiness, without which the world affords no real pleasure !

The Count's recovered fondness kept him so perpetually with me, that Charmillo, though he took the privilege of an acquaintance to come frequently to our house, had not the least opportunity of entertaining me alone for a long time, yet did his eyes send forth such soft complaining missives to my heart, such tender, yet melancholy reproaches, as were very near depriving me of all the resolution I still summoned up when I beheld this dear, this dangerous invader enter : near,  
did



did I say? alas! had that been all, had he prevailed no more, I should not now groan beneath this load of remorse for infidelity to Berosi. When first I yielded to Charmillo, I thought I but anticipated the law, which soon would authorize the favours I bestowed, and as I had been so severely wronged by Berosi, could not think what I had done, or designed to do, unjustifiable. But to proceed gradually with this melancholy narration, it was ordained, that I should be always unhappy, first by my husband's guilt, and afterward by my own; for, O Miramillia! though dying with shame, I must confess to you, that I retained that heroick resolution I had formed, no longer than I remained without temptation to break it. The industrious passion of the dear undoer no sooner found the means of seducing me, than his endearments, his despair, his reasons, though false, delivered with so charming an accent, again won upon my soul, and I became wholly lost to virtue, now without pretence, without even the most distant view of an excuse.

For some years we continued to indulge the guilty joy, and tho' I can solemnly protest, not a day, scarce an hour, passed in all that time, without my strenuous endeavours to return to duty, and repay the now sincere tenderneſſes of Berosi with equal reality and warmth; yet had I not the power, and never was any breast torn with conflicts more terrible to be sustained than mine. Bu-  
siness

finest at length, and, indeed, perhaps satiety, called Charmillo to Rome: he obtained a great post of honour there, and he sending to dispose of what effects he had in this part of the country, I was convinced I never should see him more. Now had I sufficient leisure for penitence, if that can be called so which ensures the want of power to sin. It is now eight years since I beheld this lovely ruiner of my repose, yet is his idea still before my eyes, nor can I flatter myself with a belief, that I have enough overcome the guilty passion I had for him, would not work in me the same effects it had done.

Can any state of life be more unhappy than mine, who have not only an unextinguished affection to struggle through, but also the most terrible remorse, yet both my love and my repentance alike unavailing? Pity me, best of friends, and if there be in reason or in nature the means to calm the lingering torments of my mind, afford it in your advice and consolation.

Here the weeping Violathia gave over speaking, and Miranilla perceiving her disorders, had too much good nature to chide what she could not approve; she on the contrary thought her condition required rather balsams than corrosives, and as she was a woman of excellent sense, left nothing unsaid which she thought might be of comfort to her, and at the same time be conducive to make her think of her husband, with the tenderness  
his

his behaviour now deserved, but the arguments she made use of being no way material to the subject of this book, I shall pass them over in silence, and only say that she had the satisfaction to leave her in a state of more contentment than she had found.

The ardent desires of this lady however still continuing to experiment the prediction of the fortune-teller, she took her leave of Violathia and Berosi much sooner than was consistent with either of their desires. In her way home she passed near the house of a lady who seemed to live in a perfect tranquillity, and who being pretty well advanced in years, she thought might at least be free from that destructive passion which had been almost always the cause that she had hitherto found it so difficult to have her little affair accomplished.

She ordered her coachman therefore to drive to the house of this lady, and was received by her in a manner which left her no room to doubt she should be refused in the grant of her request, as did the appearance of every thing about her make her hope there was no danger of its being in her power: she did not however immediately acquaint her with the cause of her coming, being determined before. She did so, to be fully assured that her search would not here also be as fruitless as it had hitherto been. She continued with her three or four days without letting her into the secret, in which time she observed

observed nothing that could give her cause to fear she should have less success than she wished. Never woman had a more deserving and obliging husband, two fine sons and one daughter were the product of their marriage joys, they had an affluence of the goods of fortune, lived beloved and respected by their neighbours, and in a perfect tranquillity at home, all the family seeming to study nothing but the satisfaction of the other. Such a concord thought Miramillia must infallibly produce a happiness, which without it grandeur cannot give, and now determined to pursue her project, communicated to Tellisinda, for so was the lady called, the motive which, joined to the regard she had for her, had engaged her to this visit; but no sooner had she done speaking, than the other by a deep sigh testified how little she was qualified for such an undertaking: which greatly surprizing Miramillia, Alas, said she, am I also here deceived? Is Tellisinda so unthankful to heaven for the blessings she enjoys, as not to be contented with her state? What secret care, or rather what imaginary ill, intrudes upon your peace, and poisons the real felicities of your life? Ah, my dearest Miramillia! replied that lady, have a better opinion, I beseech you, of my understanding, than to believe I create demons on purpose to disturb and fright me: no, I assure you, that on the contrary, that it was only my too strenuous endeavours to preserve my peace that has destroyed it; I feared to be unhappy, and  
have



have made myself so by-sinning to avoid misfortunes, I have met them; but I know I speak in riddles, and as my breast has long laboured with the secret, I will explain it to you, and make you judge, if the griefs I labour under have a substantial source or not. Miramillia was preparing to give her some assurances of her fidelity, but the other would not suffer her to proceed; telling her, that if she had not an entire confidence in her, she should have taken the same care to conceal her discontent from her, as she had done from the rest of the world. Some few compliments of this kind being past between them, Telli-sinda prepared herself for the performance of her promise, and soon after accomplished it in these terms



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*The History of* TELLISINDA.

**T**HOUGH, perhaps, said she, never any persons, linked in the bonds of Hymen, loved with a more true affection than myself and the Chevalier; yet having been married four years without any child, he grew so excessively discontented, that I had reason to fear a decrease of his tenderness: I endeavoured to console him for the want of a blessing, which, indeed, I then thought I never should afford him, by arguments such as these: I told him, that if we were permitted to enjoy the comforts of children, we were also free from the troubles and cares which necessarily attend a paternal state; that if heaven had thought fit to make us parents, we should have been so; and that we ought not to repine at the decrees of him, who knew better what was good for us than we did for ourselves. In fine, I omitted nothing that my little reading, both in divinity and philosophy, enabled me to say; yet still he was uneasy, and though he said nothing in contradiction to what I offered, yet did a sullen peevishness sit on his brow while listening to me, and sometimes he would

5 sing

fling from me, leaving the room while I was in the middle of my discourse. This distemper grew every day more upon him, and I began at last to fear I should entirely lose his affections: the apprehensions of so terrible a misfortune, threw me into a deep melancholy; I became oppressed with it, and could not forbear imparting it to a friend, in whom I had great confidence; by her I was persuaded, contrary to my reason, my religion, and that aversion I was bred to have to every thing which bordered on a deceit, to feign myself with child. But as there appeared no other way of regaining the affections of my husband, I was prevailed on to follow her advice. I did so; and the joy which from that time appeared in the countenance of the Chevalier, made me well enough satisfied with what I had done. Estharia, for so she was called, who had counselled me to this stratagem, took it upon her to provide a child against the time in which it was expected I should be delivered. I will not trouble you with the particulars of our management; it shall suffice to tell you, that the fraud passed undiscovered, and I was supposed to be the mother of a fine boy. I had scarce leisure for reflection, so much were my thoughts employed in answering the congratulations of my friends, and the now renewed endearments of the Chevalier; but when I had, I cannot say I was perfectly at ease; the natural antipathy I had to all kinds of deceit, made me look on myself with

with a kind of contempt; and conscious how little I deserved the tenderness I received from my husband, at least for that which had engaged it, was ashamed within myself for receiving it. I was for some time also before I could fashion myself, to behave to the child in any manner becoming a mother; but time, which renders all things easy, brought me at length to dissemble with a good grace enough; and at last, indeed, accustoming myself to fondle and caress it, grew to have a sort of tenderness: but, alas! it could at most be no more than that of a good-natured nurse, as I soon after was convinced; for my supposed son being about a year old, I became, indeed, with child, and I no sooner found I was so, than I perceived a vast difference in my affections, even to that unborn product of my own, than I had ever known for that, whose little engaging actions could not but excite a sort of love in me. In due time he, who now passes for my younger son, but is, indeed, the only one I ever had, made me in reality a mother; and with that name informed me, with all those softening fears, that tender perplexities, and ravishing fondnesses, which I had so often observed and wondered at in others. But when the joy of seeing that dear image of myself gave way to cooler consideration, how severely did I accuse myself for the deceit I had used; how greatly did I blame Estharia for the advice she had given me; but she was now dead, and past the reach of my reproaches.

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The thoughts that he must be the inheritor of the estate of my dear son, drove me almost to madness, and filled me by degrees with a kind of hatred to that poor innocent, who was but guilty of offending me through my own fault; for I must acknowledge, that from his earliest infancy till this time, he has discovered such a sweetness of disposition, as would have made me happy in being the mother of such a son, had I in reality been so. He is now esteemed the finest gentleman in this part of the country; and, in spite of the prejudice of nature, I cannot but confess, that in many things he very much excells his supposed brother; yet, deserving as he is, oh Miramillia! he is a stranger to my blood, and is it not hard that he should deprive him, who is, of his inheritance? Yet, by what means shall I avoid it? A thousand times, in the fondness of soul for the other, I have opened my mouth to tell the Chevalier the whole story; but fear and shame as often prevented me from speaking. I cannot discover the fraud I have been guilty of, without exposing myself at once to the indignation, and, perhaps, eternal hatred of a husband who is very dear to me, and the just censure and reproaches of the whole world; for it cannot be supposed, but that Herranius, so is my pretended son called, would inveigh loudly against the injustice of my proceedings. But if I were so disposed, I know not by what means I should make out the truth of what I say; Estharia

is dead, as I have before observed; there was but one person beside her let into the secret, who also is no more. I know not from whom that subtle creature procured him; nor can I, by any other proof but my own oath, make out that he is not mine: I should incur the hate and scorn of all who know me; and, perhaps, leave things in the same position they were in before. Was ever affliction equal to mine? Have you, in all your inquisition after happiness, found a person more truly distant from it, than the unfortunate Tellisinda? It is easy, madam, replied Miramillia, for any one, who is a mother, to guess a mother's grief in so perplexing a circumstance; yet cannot I advise you to throw Herranius off: he is your son by adoption, tho' not by birth; and you know the old Romans made no difference between the one and the other, but according to the virtues they observed in them. Herranius, you say, has merit, let that endear him to you; you have robbed him of parents, to whom, perhaps, he might have been dear; though misfortunes prevailed on them to part with him for the hope of a better provision: not that, methinks, I would have him, who is really your son, be deprived of his birth-right; there may be ways and means found out to make them at least equal in their fortunes; and it will be of much better consequence to study that, than, by betraying the secret to the Chevalier, run the hazard of forfeiting his affections; and, at the same time, be

guilty

guilty of a cruelty to an unhappy youth, who thinks himself your own.

Tellifinda could not but approve her reasons; she assured her she would take the advice she had so kindly given, but could not bring herself to that state of tranquillity which was necessary to oblige her in the affair which had brought her thither; nor did the other, since made acquainted with her story, except it from her; and therefore took her leave in a short time.

Having made so many vain essays among the married ladies, she began to imagine that there was no possibility of finding one in that state entirely free from care, and therefore resolved, if she prosecuted her search, it should be only to those who had not yet given up their freedom she would apply. She bethought herself of a young lady, who by the death of her parents was left mistress of a very considerable fortune; she was very beautiful, and had accomplishments enough to make her a fit wife for the first nobleman in Venice, but her gaiety, and the unaffected ease of her conversation, made it evident she was yet wholly free from any infection from that dangerous passion which is generally the original of all the misfortunes of the fair.

Miramillia had no sooner recovered the fatigues of her journey, than she went to visit Amalia, for by that name was this lady distinguished; she found a vast deal of company with her, and her good humour alone it was  
which

which gave life to the conversation. Our afflicted mother did not doubt but that contentment dwelt here, and longed till she had seen the other ladies depart, that she might communicate to her the request she had to make. At length this part of her wish was fulfilled, and she was beginning to endeavour for the other, when a woman in an ordinary habit came into the room, on the sight of whom Amalia rose from her seat, and begging pardon of Miramillia for a moment's absence, ran with her into a closet, with all the appearance of a most eager impatience in her looks and air. She returned not in a considerable time; and when she did, the alteration, which was visible in her countenance, made Miramillia believe some very extraordinary accident had happened, and in that opinion, Madam, said she, I hope you have heard nothing which should rob you of any part of that obliging cheerfulness which lately was so entertaining to your friends? Oh, madam! replied she, the saddest accident; I never was so much perplexed in my whole life; I would rather have given half my fortune, than have met with such a disappointment. It is not to be borne. Good God! continued she, fretting more and more, to be debarred of one's will in such a thing as this; sure I have the hardest fortune of any one in the world. I hope, said Miramillia, you are not entering into a law-suit? No, no, answered the other, I have enough to trouble me without that, of a



more vexatious nature; never any body was so disappointed, so mortified. The flapping the fan, the stamp of the foot, and toss of the head, accompanied these words: and filling Miramillia with a kind of curiosity of knowing what had worked so great a change in her, continued to ask her several questions concerning the cause of her disorder, as if it proceeded from the news of the death of some one she had a friendship for, and several other such like demands; to all which she answered in the negative, but joined to it still that her misfortune was far worse: which words raising to a greater height Miramillia's desire of knowing, she entreated to be made the confident of this secret; but it was not in the power of the other presently to comply with her request, the disturbance of her mind not permitting her to bring forth any more than broken sentences: tears at length afforded her some relief, and after giving a loose to them for about two or three minutes, she regained the power of speech, and related her calamity in these words: You know, said she, that there is a great ball at court next week; all the Beaumonde will be there, and every body is endeavouring to be as fine as they can: Sabina, who is, without exception, the vainest creature in the world, showed me a piece of the richest brocade I ever saw in my life, that is to be made up for her against the time; and you never heard any thing boast with so much insolence as she did, that she should be the best dressed

dressed of any body : silly creature, she forgot  
 she was talking to a person who could as well  
 afford to purchase a handsome thing as herself.  
 I was resolved to be even with her, and had  
 found a design, which, if not prevented by the  
 laziness or treachery of the person I employed  
 in it, would have been an excellent piece of  
 revenge. With a vast deal of industry, and  
 some artifice, I procured a pattern of Sabina's  
 brocade, and finding it was not to be match-  
 ed, sent it to my mercer, whom I ordered to  
 show it to the weaver, that he might make a  
 certain number of yards for me exactly of the  
 same figure, but with a vast deal more silver  
 in the ground : there are also some large green  
 leaves in it, on which I intended to have had  
 here and there several small diamonds and ru-  
 bies, and other precious stones tacked on.  
 Oh ! it would have been the most beautiful  
 fancy, and the richest withal, that ever was  
 seen ; but, oh Miramillia ! the base wretch,  
 the villain that I depended on, that promised  
 me so faithfully, has disappointed me ; he sent  
 word just now, that he begged my pardon,  
 but could not possibly get it done in the time.  
 Was ever such a neglect, such an impudence,  
 when I had told the fellow he must work  
 night and day to do it. I could tear him in  
 pieces and myself too, that I must be tri-  
 umphed over by such a creature as Sabina,  
 who, though she is neither handsome nor very  
 young, will have all the world staring and ad-  
 miring her clothes, while no body takes any

notice of me, though, without any vanity, there is no comparison between us.

Miramillia could scarce contain her laughter at the recital of so ridiculous a misfortune, and willing to console her as well as she could——But, dear Amalia! said she, why should you afflict yourself so deeply? Methinks this vexation might easily be removed; there are without doubt other very handsome silks in town, buy the richest the shops will afford, and pursue your design of embroidering it with diamonds; I am confident you may make it appear equally glorious with hers, whatever it be. That is true, replied Amalia; but, my dear, you mistake the thing: the mortification I proposed to give her pride was this, to have of the very same pattern a silk so infinitely to outshine hers. I would not give a ryal to be finer than she, in any other dress; but it would have been the most elegant satisfaction to have observed the baulk it would have been to her, to have beheld her own pattern so much outdone. But why do I talk of it? continued she; my hope is past; all my designs are frustrated; and I must content myself either to feign an indisposition and stay at home, or by going there resolve to endure all the fine complements that will be made her on the delicacy of her fancy.

All that Miramillia could say to her was of little service to make her in a better humour, and she was obliged to leave her to indulge it, not importing any thing of the reasons which  
had

had induced her to this visit, rightly judging, that when people set their hearts on trifles, a disappointment even in them is as hard to be endured, as things of the greatest consequence are to others.

Not being willing yet to give over her search, the next whose character promised her success was Clorilla, a young lady of great birth, beauty, and education; but she was inconsolable, because her father, being of a quite different turn of mind, had refused a post of honour offered him by the senate, and another had accepted it, who had daughters, that by virtue of their father's office were now entitled to sit above her in all publick assemblies. She bore this vexation with much the same degree of moderation as Amalia had done the disappointment of her silk: Miramillia concluded nothing was to be expected here to forward the experiment she was so much desirous to make trial of, ordered her coach to drive to the house of Claribella, a young lady who seemed to have every thing that can complete happiness excepting a husband, and that that was every day in her power to be possessed of, being solicited in marriage by the richest and most accomplished noblemen in Venice; but she appeared no friend to love, and declared to all her acquaintance, that she had yet never seen the man who had any temptations for her to quit her dearer liberty. She had the reputation of being of the most easy, as well as gay temper imaginable, and Miramillia



lia accused herself of want of thought that she had not made the first application to her which might probably have saved her the trouble of the rest : but, alas ! she had not time to communicate to her the intent of her visit, before she had reason to suspect it would be of little purpose : she received her indeed with all the civilities due to a lady of her quality and character, but yet there might be seen a sort of peevishness in all her air, which denoted she was far from being perfectly at ease, which Miramillia perceiving, asked if she was well ; and that question presently informed her how much fame had deceived her in reporting this lady for a woman of so much good humour. I am not at all surprized, madam, answered she, that you should take me to be indisposed ; not that I think I am at all altered since you saw me last, but the prodigious charms of Ismenia make too great an eclat to suffer any other woman to be thought tolerable. It would be impossible to represent the surprize in which these words involved the person to whom they were addressed ; she knew, indeed, there was a lady called Ismenia, that she was the daughter of a senator, and esteemed a very lovely maid ; but what concern this should be of Charibella's, or why she should name her to a person who had not the least acquaintance with her, she could not imagine : to ease herself therefore of this perplexity, As I am ignorant, said she, of any affairs of that lady, I cannot guess of what consequence her beauty

can

can be to you. Pardon me, madam, resumed the other, your late griefs have, perhaps, made you regardless of the news of the town, else it is impossible but you must have heard the vast reputation Ismenia has acquired by the death of Charino. You would oblige me with the relation of it, said Miramillia; for I assure you I never heard it mentioned, though I had formerly some acquaintance with Charino, and looked on him as a most accomplished gentleman. He was so, replied Claribella; and no doubt, but if he had made his application, might have been thought well of by women of greater distinction than Ismenia: but what he saw in her, heaven knows, to inspire him with so prodigious a passion; the more he adored, the more she insulted. I never saw any thing in my life arrive at that monstrous height of vanity she did; nor a man, especially one who had sense too, degenerate to so low and mean a submission as did Charino: he was like her shadow, followed her wherever she went, talked of her in all company as of the most lovely creature in the world. Thus it went on between them for about three months, at the end of which she continuing to use him ill, he shot himself through the head, leaving a letter behind him to acquaint the world for what cause he did it. Since this demonstration of her power, there is no enduring Ismenia; she is grown so assuming, that it is impossible to converse with her, and yet you cannot imagine how much she is admired by the men; I sup-

pose they think, because one has been fool enough to die for her, that she really deserves to be cried up in the manner she is; in fine, there is nothing now talked of in town but her beauty; she is the general toast; and it is looked on as folly or envy not to join in the ridiculous praises which are given her. This is the first time I ever heard of this adventure, said Miramillia, and am extremely sorry that Charino should have so small a sense of the duties of religion, and so poignant a one of a foolish passion. But I cannot see why you should be discontented at it, any farther than common compassion for the untimely death of so agreeable a Chevalier. If Ismenia has stupidity enough to be pleased with so fatal an effect of her charms, and is induced by her vanity to behave in the manner you describe, it is easy to break-off all acquaintance with her; for my part, though I am concerned when I see any of my sex give way to fables of that kind, I think it not my duty to afflict myself for what I cannot prevent, nor happens through any fault of mine. But can I stop my ears from the encomiums with which I am perpetually persecuted? cried Claribella. Can any thing be more provoking, than to see mankind so much bewitched to a creature, that, in my opinion, has no one good quality to attract their admiration? Does not the whole world run mad after her, worship her as a goddess? The meanest of the people, unblest with opportunity to view the mighty wonder near,

stand in the street in throngs, watching her coming out, then croud about her chariot, crying how fair she is! how exquisitely charming! Wherever she goes, all eyes are fixed upon her; all tongues seem to outvie each other in her praise, as if the folly of Charino had spread its infection through all the race of man. No, certainly, replied Miramillia, (with a half smile, now plainly perceiving the cause of her disquiet) not through all, I dare say; you have your admirers, who confess your power of charming. Coxcombs! wretches all! resumed the fair votary of envy, what avails their pretending a passion for me, when they do nothing to attest it to the world. Oh, Miramillia! a woman gains more glory to have one man die for her, than to have a thousand live and languish at her feet. It was not all Charino could say or swear, that set up the fame of Ismenia; but in that one action, his death, he has recorded the force of her charms to all posterity. Heavens! how fortunate some women are, and how much the contrary others! Notwithstanding my great estate, allowed good qualities, and birth, I pass for nothing in the esteem of the world, am unregarded, slighted, and yet, without my glass extremely deceives me, she is far from having the pre-eminence over me, either in face or shape. Good God! how is it possible to be contented under such visible partiality. She had not, perhaps, given over her exclamations for a much longer time, had the torrent



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rent of her tears allowed the power of farther speech : nor could Miramillia offer any thing to interrupt her, so greatly was she amazed that a woman, endued with good sense in other things, should so much suffer it to be debased by her excessive vanity and desire of admiration. But perceiving she had left off speaking, could not forbear mixing some grave reproofs with her consolations ; she begged her to consider how little essential to true happiness was being accounted beautiful, and how much better it was to be sincerely loved by one worthy man, than to have the noisy encomiums of the whole sex, and, at the same time, reminded her that nothing was more an argument of a mean and ungenerous soul than to envy another, either for real or imaginary perfections. But how little effect such kind of discourses were able to work on her, any one, who in the course of their life has met with a woman of Claribella's temper, may easily believe. She said nothing, however, in opposition to her persuasions ; but the other finding little hopes of making a convert of her, shortened her visit, and departed with a perfect indignation in her mind, that persons, whom heaven designed to bless, should, by their own perverseness of disposition, render themselves happy. But her own misfortunes hindering her from giving too much attention to the calamities of others, whether real or imaginary, she resolved to make yet one more essay.

Selinda

Selinda was a young lady very much celebrated for an uncommon share of wit and understanding, and being endowed with every thing she could wish for in life, she imagined not that such a one would discontent herself with any fancied ills; to her therefore she resolved to apply, and in a few days made her a visit, with all that form which is made use of among people who live in the great world, and are not sufficiently acquainted with each other, to have made a mutual agreement to throw off those tiresome and indeed unnecessary ceremonies.

But she was soon convinced how much she was deceived in her expectations here, for desiring to speak with her. The chief attendant, with air affected, and all that mimicry of good breeding which those sort of people abound with, told her, that her lady could by no means appear; that her favourite lap-dog had died of an apoplexy some few days ago, and she was inconsolable for so great a misfortune; but that as soon as she saw company, she was very certain she would think herself favoured in a visit from her. This put Miramillia beyond all patience: Heavens! cried she to herself, are all our sex devoted to disquiet? Is there a fate upon us to be wretched? Must we labour under woes of our own formation, when fortune contributes all she can to make us happy? Good God! continued she, that even wit is not a defence from vanity and affection. Thus, like

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like Amalia, Clorilla and Claribella, do we torment ourselves with childish and imaginary ills, till taught by real ones how mad we have been, and with the past could be again recalled.

These reflections put her in so ill a humour, that she was more than half determined here to give over an enquiry, in which she saw so little appearance of success; and had, perhaps, contented herself to wait till heaven should be pleased, by some other means than those she had made trial of, to put an end to the suspense she was in concerning her dear son; if the unexpected arrival of a lady, who was extremely dear to her, and who she had not seen of a long time, had not presented her with a probability of accomplishing her desire by her means. She was called Clara, daughter of a grandee of Venice, and at his death left mistress of a plentiful fortune; but having something in her nature, averse to those extraordinary passions with which her sex are too frequently animated, she took warning by her sister's fate, who was married to a very ill husband, and would never encourage any declarations of love. She had past her bloom without feeling any of those emotions so destructive to the fair; and as she had no visible care upon her, which could in the least take up her thoughts, our impatient mother resumed her desires, of experiencing the sincerity of the fortune-teller, since she thought the means were, in good earnest, in her power:  
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and, indeed, in the character of Clara there was something more promising than in that of any other she had addressed: she had not only an affluence of wealth, but as much as she was ambitious of: her actions were entirely free, either from controul or censure; she did in every thing as she pleased, but had no desire to do any thing that would not be approved by others as well as herself. She had compassion enough to relieve the woes of others, if in her power to do it; but not so much as to make herself uneasy when their misfortunes were past remedy: she was of a chearful disposition, though not over gay; and as free from all manner of affectation as she seemed to be of care. To add to all this, she was extremely pious, and those exercises of devotion, which some perform but to avoid reproof, were to her a pleasure. In fine, there was nothing in her, but what made her appear to be in a state of perfect tranquillity; and the intimacy which had been between her and Miramillia being renewed on this meeting, she made no scruple of communicating to her the intention she had, of employing her in the work she so passionately longed to see completed. Scarce could Clara, on the first motion of her request, believe she was in earnest; but when the other assured her that she was so, and acquainted her with what pains she had been at already to accomplish it, wonder seemed to supply the place of gaiety, and she began very seriously



ously to remind her, that such notions were altogether inconsistent, either with that fine understanding she had given proofs of in other things, and also with that resignation and dependance which is enjoined by religion. Miramillia could not deny the truth of her arguments, and assured her, that she had a thousand times reasoned with herself in the same manner; but, continued she, it can be no great crime, I hope, to make so inoffensive an experiment of the truth of the predictor. I depend not on it; at least, I think I do not: but, oh my dear Clara, you are insensible what it is to labour under sorrows such as mine; you are a stranger to a mother's fondness and a mother's grief: you know not what it is to have set your heart, to have centered all your affections, all your hopes, all your fears, on one dear object; and then to have it snatched away by means so strange, so unexpected, and so intricate. Reason, philosophy, and even religion itself, gives some allowance to a case like mine, and Clara sure will not be more severe; and to engage you to the grant of what I ask, I solemnly protest, that if I reap not the fruit of my long expectations by your means, I never will attempt it more; because I dare believe, you are so entirely of that disposition the fortune-teller described, as necessary to make me happy; that if I am not so in hearing of my dear son in a small time after the accomplishment

complishment of the work, I shall be convinced he has deceived me, and think on all, who pretend to see into futurity, with the contempt they merit. But why, resumed the other, should you ever have dependance on such a riddle? I cannot say, I think the fellow has deceived you; in my mind, the prediction, on which you build such hopes, is far from being any such matter. If I remember what you told me, I think it was, that when a person, wholly free from any worldly care or discontent, should undertake this piece of sempstry, you should be certain to hear news of your son; I hope you will do so, my dear, by other means; for this, depend on it, is an impossibility to be accomplished, and mentioned but to amuse your sorrows, and divert you from too deep a reflection, by putting you on enquiry into what never was, nor ever will be. Believe me, that nothing can be more true than these words of the poet, that

“Pleasure never comes sincere to man,  
 “But lent by heaven upon hard usury:  
 “And while Jove holds out the bowl of joy,  
 “E’er it can reach our lips, ’tis dash’d with  
 “gall,  
 “By some left-handed god.—”

Every body has their cares, their disquiets and perplexities of some kind or other; and to hope for perfect tranquillity on earth, is to  
 imagine

imagine the garden of Eden restored, humanity in its first state of innocence, and all the inferior beings in that subjection they were placed before the fall. Our depraved appetites will now, in spite of the severest dictates of morality and revealed religion, run into desires and passions, which occasion the most terrible conflicts to subdue; and worse evils from remorse and late repentance, if suffered to get the mastery. Ease, Miramillia, is not the portion of this life, and the most the best of us can boast, is, that we have struggled well.

With too much delicacy, said that afflicted lady, do you reason on this subject; I search not for things impossible, and am too sensible of the weakness of nature, as she now operates, to hope to find a person, who has never had a thought for which she might condemn herself; nor do I think the predictor had any such view as you seem to hint. I shall sufficiently experience his truth, if you consent to make the trial; because I am convinced, you are in fact not only as easy, but as happy also, as it is possible to be in these times. Neither is there any knowing that, replied Clara, every body does not wear the disorders of their minds in their faces; and, perhaps, as sedate as I appear, I may have tumults within, more truly pitiable, than some who fill your ears with continual complaints. They had a great deal of discourse on this subject,

subject, but the repetition of it being no way material to the design of this book, I shall only say, that all the arguments Clara could urge being ineffectual, to persuade Miramillia that there was nothing at all to be expected from her project; or that if there were, that she was not a proper person to undertake it; and that lady still persisting in her entreaties, the other told her, that since nothing else would convince her, she would inform her of some passages in the former part of her life, which would entirely destroy all the opinion she had of her happiness. Miramillia assured her, she could be grieved at nothing more than such a conviction; but could not yet help expressing some diffidence in her sincerity, till the other began the recital she had promised, in these or the like words.



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*The History of CLARA and FERDINAND.*

**Y**OU know, said she, that the ill fortune my sister had in marriage, making me take a resolution of continuing in a single state, I left Venice and retired to a seat I had in the country, on purpose to avoid being persecuted with the tiresome solicitations of a sex, I had not the least inclination to encourage, and was determined never to enter into an engagement with, on any terms of love or marriage; some few pretenders followed me to this retreat, and others attempted to charm me back with amorous epistles, but by neglecting I got rid of them at last; and my humour being in a short time known in that part of the country where I lived, prevented the gentlemen there from making me any impertinent declarations of a passion, which otherwise my fortune and birth, perchance, might be thought considerable enough to have inspired. In fine, I lived in perfect ease, and was not far from that state of mind, which you are at present so desirous to find a person possessed of. But, alas!

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this sweet tranquillity was but of short duration, and, like all other happinesses of life, staid no longer than to give me a taste of what it was, then fled away, and left the void within my breast, to be filled up with its most dreadful opposites.

The only one of the male sex, who I suffered to be much with me, was my cousin, the Chevalier Ferdinand; and, indeed, he was a young gentleman of so many fine accomplishments, that I should have thought it an injustice to myself, not to have indulged the improvements I received from his conversation: and as he was so nearly related to me, being my mother's sister's son, it would have been ridiculous to have denied him access for the same reasons I did others. I had all the regard for him which the nearness of blood not only excuses, but also seems to make a part of our duty; and for his fine sense and good humour, yet a more strong esteem. He seemed to have the most perfect and disinterested friendship for me, and I, in reality, had as much for him as is possible to feel, unaccompanied by any of those emotions, which, too often, are the consequences of an extraordinary intimacy between persons of a different sex. 'Tis certain, nothing could be more innocent in appearance, than the professions of respect with which he treated me, and I thought myself happy in such a companion, friend, and adviser. I always used

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him as a brother, he behaved to me as became a sister to receive; and I was so far from suspecting him of any dishonourable intentions against me, that had I been guilty of any sentiments to the prejudice of my virtue or my peace, I believe I should as soon have had recourse to him, as to my confessor, for arguments to enable me to overcome them. So artful are mankind in dissimulation, and so little is our unsuspecting sex capable of seeing into their deep designings.

But not to detain your attention with any unavailing reflections on an irremediable Misfortune, I was sitting with him one evening, observing how beautifully the moon played on a little stream opposite to the window; we fell into some discourse concerning the pleasures of the season, for it was then that part of the year in which neither cold nor heat is too prevalent, and afterwards agreed to take a walk in a fine meadow adjacent to the house. The refreshing breezes and delightful solitude of the place drew us to a little wood at the extent of the meadow, where, as we walked, he entertained me with many instructive and pleasing observations on the various changes of nature: I took notice, that all the time he was speaking, he was plating together some rushes, which he plucked from the side of the brook as we past it to go into the meadow; I was once or twice about to ask him what new amusement he had found out, but other conversation preventing me, he explained the meaning

meaning of what he had been doing in these terms: Who would think, said he, that there should be so wonderful a strength in these grass joined together in this manner? How easy were it for a lover to obtain the utmost of his wishes by the means of this bandage? Bless me, said I, laughing, what has put such whims in your head? A woman must be at least half consenting to her own rape, that would suffer herself to be confined by such as these. You are mistaken, cousin, answered he, I dare venture any wager with you, that you could by no means unloose your hands, when tied with these as I have platted them together. I, not imagining he had any other meaning than to divert himself and me, let him fasten my hands together; which having done, he threw them over my head, and at the same moment my body on the ground, where I was immediately convinced of the base design he had in this pretended raillery: in fine, Miramillia, I was compelled to suffer from this imagined friend, this seemingly worthy man, all that I could have feared from the most dissolute of his sex, the most abandoned and brutal ravisher; in vain were all my shrieks, my cries, my tears, and adjurations; the villainous enterprize, he confest, had long been in his head, and nothing should prevent him from the perpetration of it. The first use I made of my liberty, when I had regained it, was to seize on his sword, resolving to end my disgrace with my life; but his strength

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in this also rendered my endeavours fruitless, and he perforce made me sit down by him at the foot of a spreading oak, beneath whose branches my ruin had been accomplished. As he wanted not every insinuating art, he omitted nothing which he thought might reconcile me to what he had done; he protested, that he had long loved me with the most unvanquishable affection, but that perceiving the fixed aversion I had entertained to marriage, he durst not make any declarations of his passion, fearing to be banished from my presence and lose my society for ever; and that unable to live without enjoying me, he had resolved on this desperate course; with a thousand other such like excuses, which men on such a score are never at a loss to form. Rage, despair, and shame, mixt with the most strong surprise, at first made me deaf to all he said; but certainly there is nothing more weak than woman's anger, when she is once persuaded to believe the wrongs she has received were only occasioned by excess of love: there is something in the nature of that passion, though we feel it not ourselves, that will not suffer us to continue our resentments long against the man who can once convince us we are dear to him. After a thousand curses, and the most bitter reproaches, I was at last won to forgive the violation; and though I thought myself the most wretched of all created beings, and reflected on the deed of shame with detestation only, yet did I not hate the author  
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of it. I told him I would pardon all he had done on two conditions, first, that he never would divulge it by any unguarded word or action, and next, that he would for ever shun my presence. It is not to be doubted but that he swore as zealously as I would have him to perform the first, but for the other he begged I would not for my own sake insist upon it; a sudden estrangement from that intimacy which had been between us might, he said, occasion censures no way to the advantage of my reputation. I could not avoid confessing the truth of this argument, and therefore consented he should visit me as he had done, but assuring him at the same time, that I yielded not to see him but on that consideration, and that he must never hope that I would look on him but as the undoer of my honour, and the man whom of all the world I had most cause to hate. He made me many speeches on my cruelty, as he termed it; but I had good reason, since by his impudent presuming to talk to me of his detested passion, that he took the resentments I at that time testified for no more than the first strugglings of my modesty, and doubted not but he should hereafter obtain by my free consent what as yet he had not but by force become master of.

When I came home, and had leisure to reflect on the misfortune which had happened to me, I wholly abandoned myself to grief; the more I considered, the more I found the

misery of my condition, and hated the author of my shame: I wondered at the tameness I had shewn, and accused myself of meanness of spirit, that instead of attempting my own life, I had not aimed to take that of my ravisher. But when I remembered that I had pardoned him, and had promised to continue my former conversation with him, I looked on my own behaviour to be almost as criminal as his had been. Never did poor distracted creature pass a night in greater agonies than did I the first after my ruin; sleep was entirely a stranger to my eyes, and I was so much disordered all the next day, that I wore my excuse in my face; for seeing no company, he was among those that came to visit me, but being told I was ill, pressed not to be introduced, believing with good reason that it was to him chiefly I was denied, and thought it best to let the fury of my resentment work off before he saw me again; but as all things, violent at first, grow cool by degrees, my reason and the consideration that to seclude myself from the world all on a sudden, without any visible pretence, would make the inquisitive zealous to discover the cause, I again endeavoured to look like myself, and wore a show of my former serenity, though my heart was full of the most poignant anguish. I cannot express with what terrible disorders it was that I was obliged to receive him as I had been accustomed, if I had not, at some times, when being alone with him, vented  
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that displeasure which before company lay smothered in my breast, I believe I should have burst; but whenever any of those opportunities arrived, he returned my reproaches with so much humility, and a show of the most endearing tenderness, that my guilty heart was sometimes ready to excuse what he had done: I blush to think how far my woman's weakness might at length have carried me, if an accident had not happened, which, though it involved me in a crime, perhaps, yet less deserving pardon, preserved me from falling into that which justly renders our sex so contemptible in the eyes of mankind.

I had a great many ladies with me one day, among whom was one who was lately married; being all of the same sex, we happened to enter into a gay conversation on the change of her condition, and that naturally introducing many little entertaining stories, how wonderful was it that I restrained myself from uttering any exclamation which might have proclaimed my shame to the whole company, when one of them related the manner of my undoing with a description so exact, as if she had been witness of it! Yet did I conceal my disorders in a shew of surprize, and feigning not to believe such a thing could be possible, demanded if she heard it for a truth, and if she could guess who the persons were; to which she answered in these stabbing terms: It was from my husband, said she, that I heard this adventure; he assures me that it is fact, and hap-



pened very lately ; but as to the names of the persons concerned in it, he is either really ignorant, or pretends that he is so. I spoke no more of it, and was glad to find the conversation turn on some other subject ; but when I was left alone, heavens ! what a tempest of wild passions invaded my distracted soul ; I doubted not but my disgrace would soon become the common chat. Already it is so, cried I to myself ; there is nothing but my name a secret, and that no doubt will soon be added to complete the triumph of that consummate villain : perhaps already it is revealed ; and while I am the only person to whom it is a secret, the jest of my undoing is heightened to behold my imaginary security ; my affected virtue ridiculed, and all the little policies I made to hide my shame, exploded.

It is not to be doubted but that sentiments such as these entirely destroyed all that tenderness which his seemingly humble passion had raised in me ; but no tongue can express how deadly a hatred now filled up the place. I thought of nothing but revenge, and in a short time resolved on the means of accomplishing it : fortune favoured my intentions so far, that, till I had wholly contrived in what manner I should proceed, some business prevented him from visiting me ; otherwise I should, by letting him know I was not unacquainted with this second injury, have given him warning of the mischiefs which my just rage might inflict on him, and, perhaps too,

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in the bitter reproaches I should have loaded him with, great part of that spirit, which animated me to revenge, had been evaporated. But his absence giving me time to deliberate calmly on what I then thought I ought to do, I had leisure to form a project which seemed to me the most justifiable one in the world. To carry on my design, therefore, I acted the hypocrite with as much art as he had done; when next he came, I received him with looks more chearful and less reserved than I had done ever since that fatal night in which my ruin was compleated; and as he never omitted any opportunity of expressing himself to me in the most tender manner, I seemed now to listen to him with less reluctance than usual; and after suffering him to entertain me a great while on that subject, affected to be extremely softened by the declarations he had made me of an inviolable passion, and at last behaved in a manner as could give him no room to doubt I would not become as kind as he could wish. Thus did I delude his hopes till about the same hour he had made choice on for my undoing; and the night being equally pleasant with that, I asked him to accompany me in a little walk, suiting my voice and looks, while I was speaking, to the fond meaning I aimed to have him think was in my words: in fine, I counterfeited so well, that he was wholly deceived into the most rapturous imagination that could be of my expected kindness, and

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taking my hand he led me, without my naming it, toward the wood : I was very well pleased that he so readily fell into the snare, having designed to make the scene of my ruin that of my revenge : I had gathered rushes as I passed the brook, and weaving them as I perceived he had done ; I cannot imagine, cried I with an air of wantonness, how you fastened my hands with this sort of bandage ; I do not think I could make you my prisoner so easily. My soul has long been your slave, answered he, and it is always in your power to make my body so. With these words he presented his hands, and shewed me how to tie them ; which having done, I threw them over his head, laughing all the while, and crying, Now I will ravish you. It is easy to believe he would not attempt any thing that might interrupt this frolick, as he imagined it ; and on my giving him a little push, fell down on his back, which I no sooner perceived, than throwing myself upon him, and taking out a penknife, which I had put in my pocket for that purpose, No more shalt thou ravish, cried I, and basely report the deed ; Clara shall be the last thou shalt betray ; live henceforth the scorn of thy own sex, as thou hast made me of mine ; live, but no more a man. Nor were these idle threatenings, made bold as well as cruel by my revenge, I acted the business of my words, and in so short a time that he had not the power to hinder what I was about, either by force or persuasions. Overcome, however,

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with the violence of those emotions which had agitated me to so extravagant an attempt, I had no sooner accomplished it, than I ran shrieking from the place, and hid myself in another part of the wood. Revenge now satiated was already converted to remorse, and frightened, and ashamed, at what I had done, I grew almost wild. For some hours did I indulge distraction in that solitary place; but at length a kind of tenderness, which I know not whether to call a virtue or a vice, came over my soul, and forced me to go back where I had left the unhappy Ferdinand; but he had risen and was departed: the horror I was in working different ways, according to the various emotions with which I was agitated, now drove me home, believing he was gone to my house, to expose and upbraid the barbarity I had been guilty of. One would think this consideration should rather have deterred me; and I should have thought it a less evil to have remained for ever in that wood, and lived a savage among brute breasts, than to have heard of the act I had been doing, and the occasion of it with all the shameful circumstances related before my face. But the notions with which, that moment, I was possessed, were desperation all, and bold unthinking frenzy. My servants were astonished to see me return alone, and asked where Don Ferdinand was gone. I had presence enough of mind to answer that he had attended me to the door, and had taken leave:

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To conceal my disorders from their observation, I pretended to have been seized with a violent indisposition, and went immediately to bed : but, oh ! sleep was the whole night a stranger to my eyes ; I could not reflect on what I had done without such a mixture of shame, repentance, and grief, that nothing is more strange than that I did not lay violent hands on my own life : rage and hate were passions now extinguished in me, or if they had yet a being, myself was the only object of them. I thought of Ferdinand now only with the extremest tenderness and pity, and conscious how unavailing these soft emotions were to repair the injury my wild revenge had done, I suffered agonies which words would but faintly represent ; yet were infinitely entreated, when early the next morning my maid brought a letter to me, which she said had been just delivered to her by the servant of that unfortunate Chevalier. I hastily broke the seal, and found it contained these lines :

*“ To the too-lovely cruel CLARA.*

“ **T**HIS comes not to upbraid a revenge  
 “ which I must allow to be too just,  
 “ but to acquaint you that it has failed of the  
 “ most poignant part of it. You intended  
 “ me a life full of remorse and infamy, but  
 “ instead of that, have given me a death  
 “ which cannot but be glorious, since in-  
 “ flicted

“ flicted by you ; and is no other than a  
 “ martyrdom to that passion, to which I was  
 “ the most faithful votary. My surgeon in-  
 “ forms me I cannot live six hours ; be so ex-  
 “ cellently good, not to suffer me to go out  
 “ of the world without seeing you ; the short  
 “ time allowed me I would employ in make-  
 “ ing you what reparation that is in the power  
 “ of

“ The almost expiring,

“ but still adoring, and

“ most faithful,

“ FERDINAND.”

By what I have told you of my sentiments before the receipt of this billet, you may be able to guess the condition in which I was plunged at reading it. Distraction was mean to what I felt : the patience, the resignation, the forgiving tenderness, with which he mentioned the barbarous action I had been guilty of, set it before my eyes in so monstrous a light, that nothing but his desires of seeing me, could have prevailed on me to have lived a moment. Forgetting I was naked, I started from the bed, and was about to have run out of the house in that posture, had I not been hindered by my maids ; but when they were dressing me, the haste I made to get



ready retarded my being so ; I called for one thing instead of another, and appeared so much confused and wild, that had they not known the strict friendship between me and my cousin, and been told of the danger he was in, though not the cause of it; they would certainly have believed I was seized with some sudden frenzy. But not to keep your expectation on the rack for the event, when I came into the chamber of the unfortunate Ferdinand, he received me with a look which compleated all that the workings of my own sad mind had but begun, to take away some motions of my senses ; and as I approached the bed, I fell down motionless on the floor ; several persons being in the room with him, all their care was employed to bring me to myself again ; which having done, all the use I made of my recovered speech, was to send forth the most bitter cries and exclamations. I know not what I should have uttered in this the most violent agony, sure, that every soul endured, if he, perceiving the greatness of my grief, and more tender of my honour than I could be capable of in that distressful moment, had not desired all who were in the room to withdraw : and as soon as they were, taking one of my hands, and putting it to his mouth, Though to see my death has this effect on you, said he, I think my life well lost ; yet do not, I beseech you, give any demonstrations of a concern to the prejudice of your  
repu-

reputation. It is enough I know you do not hate me; I would not have you do any thing which should make the world believe you love me more than is consistent with the nearness of our blood, and the ties of friendship. He was about to say something more, when I interrupted him by crying, Ah, Ferdinand! had you always preserved that regard for my honour and reputation, it would not have been on these sad terms we now had met. I then proceeded to inform him of what I had been told concerning his revealing the history of my undoing: to which he answered, I believe, with the utmost sincerity, that it was true he had, one night when overcome with wine, related such a thing, as of a transaction he had casually been informed; but assured me, on the word of a dying man, that he had been so far from making any mention of me, that he had not even named himself as the presuming person. But though, continued he, I am innocent as to the latter part of your accusation, I am but too guilty of the first, and own the justice of your resentments, and the punishment they have inflicted on me; yet, oh! I beg my life may expiate my offence, and as some mitigation of it, believe I had not had recourse to means so unwarrantable, for the gratification of my passion, had not all others been denied. Your known aversion to marriage, our near kindred, my own demerits, every thing conspired to make me despair of your

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ever being mine, by any other measures than those my boundless passion instigated me to make use of. Oh, pardon it; and after death think more kindly on me than you could do in life. Oh, Miramillia! how much did this assurance of his innocence (I mean as to that particular for which I had been enraged to that extravagant degree) both torment and please me; I own I now loved him well enough to take a delight in believing he had too sincere and ardent a tenderness for me, to suffer him to speak of me in a manner I should not approve; but then to reflect how I had returned that tenderness, that death, in the most painful way, was the reward of his ill-placed affection, turned me all to horror and despair, and hatred of myself. When I remembered that I had forgiven him the worst injury a woman can receive, or man be guilty of; yet had so severely revenged an imaginary wrong to my reputation, I had not the least to say in my defence: my boasted virtue seemed only prudery now, and vain fantastick pride; I appeared, in my own eyes, the most contemptible, the most vain, and, at the same time, the most cruel, ungrateful, and inhuman, of all created beings. I testified the deep sense I had of what I had done, by all the expressions of grief that words could form; but they, alas! were far enervate: I testified it by all the tokens of despair, of remorse, of horror; and the poor, tender, almost dying creature, regardless  
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of his own anguish, sunk at the sight of mine. Sure never was any thing so truly dismal as this scene : we not only exchanged a mutual forgiveness, but, in these fatal moments, refined the passions, we were before possessed of, to such a sublime degree, that sadness never appeared in so much pomp ; the wild desires, which had prompted him to my undoing, were now converted into the most holy fires, and purest raptures ; the friendship I had for him, into the most tender of those affections which can be called love. I would have died to have preserved him ; and he seemed to regret the loss of life for no other reason, than because it separated him from me. But when, in the bitterest anguish of soul, I vowed not to survive him, a paleness, more ghastly even than that of death, came over his face, and for some moments deprived him of the power of speech ; tho' when it was regained, he charged me, he conjured me, by religion, by nature, and for the sake of his eternal peace, not to suffer him to leave the world with such a fear ; nor would he be contented, till I had sworn, in the most solemn manner, to give over all thoughts that desperation might inspire. In the most endearing, yet solemn woe, did we pass the time, till a servant came in to acquaint Ferdinand, that the person he had sent for to draw up his commands in writing, attended his orders ; on which, he being introduced, I had the confirmation of that tenderness he professed,

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in hearing myself named the sole heir of all his wealth. Ah ! little did the witnesses of it imagine he showed this kindness to his murderer. The lawyer and confessor engrossed all his remaining moments till the very last, in which he took me in his arms, and expired on my breast, which soon grew as motionless as his : it was a full hour [as they afterward told me] before they brought me to myself ; and when I was, they were obliged to force me from the body, and carry me home, fearing the sight of that dreadful spectacle should deprive me of my senses ; and, indeed, I could not boast the perfect use of them for a great while. When reason had a little recovered her dominion over my soul, I laboured, as much as possible, to regain that tranquillity the unhappy accidents had erased ; but how much in vain do we aim at content ? How fruitless are all endeavours to draw from our minds the stings of remorse ? They are like the gnawings of the poet's vulture, which the more you shrink from, holds you the faster still, and seizes with more deadly gripes. For many years this was my state, but that passed over ; a gloomy melancholy succeeded, a heavy weight of dulness, or rather stupidity, fell on my spirits ; and never, never more shall I regain that true content, that serenity of mind, I once was blessed with. Diversions, company, all the amusements that the art of man ever invented to charm the gay, I made trial of, but

but all in vain. Conscience, when most repelled, recoils with greater violence; and all the hope I had was in religion; I therefore retired to a nunnery, and never did any one commence a more strict observation of the rules prescribed there. I know not how far the admonitions of the good priests, and the fellowship of the holy sisterhood, might in time work on me, to abandon every care but that of religion, had either of them behaved in the manner I expected from them. But, alas! those sacred walls exclude not those very vices which we often fly to them to avoid; pride, hypocrisy, and avarice, have their dwelling there, as well as in the court or city. How often have I seen one famed for some act of supererogation, exult over her less pious sister, and affect to dictate even to her very thoughts. Another, though entered by constraint, pretends a zeal almost equal to enthusiasm, and studies only how to inveigh against those pleasures she in secret languishes to enjoy. A third sort, and, indeed, the greatest number, are those, who while they aim only to inspire in you a desire of continuing with them for propagation of virtue, are all the time contriving only the means to enrich their own convents; and of this I had sufficient experience: the fortune I was now mistress of had been a handsome stipend, and they omitted no arts to keep me among them; but whether it was owing to my penetration, I know not, or that my melancholy

choly made me less liable to flattery, by being more ill-humoured than formerly; but I saw through their designs immediately, and that brought me into so great a contempt of them, that I judged, if I was to hope a cure from true religion, it must not be among those vain and superficial pretenders I must expect to find it. I left the convent, therefore, and returned to my house, where I have lived, for the most part, ever since. I cannot say but time, which destroyed those agonies with which I was at first oppressed, has made a very great abatement also in the melancholy that succeeded it; yet am I still, and ever shall be, in a condition of mind, far from what you wish to find, for the experiment of that spell the fortune-teller advised.

Here Clara left off speaking; and it was now the business of Miramillia to offer what consolation was in her power; which she did with her accustomed sweetness. They stayed some little time together; after which our afflicted mother returned to her own house, with a full resolution to give over an enquiry which she was now convinced would be altogether fruitless, and depend wholly on heaven for the restoration of her peace; either in hearing news of that dear son whose loss had given her so much grief, or in obtaining a stock of patience to support the uncertainty.

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She had not fixed this determination many days before she found the good effects of it: that son, whose absence she had so long deplored, and who no body now believed was in the world, was, when she least expected it, returned to her embraces. A coach-and-fix, containing the young Adario, so he was called, a grave old gentleman, and a most beautiful virgin, came to her gate. The transport she was in to behold once more that darling of her soul, left her not the power of observing by whom he was accompanied: she hung upon his neck; she clasped him with raptures, such as only mothers know; she gazed on him with an agony of pleasure; for a long time she could bring no other words, than My son! My son! Adario! My dear Adario! But extacy at length giving way to reflection; Where have you been? she cried, and why, by your absence and your silence, have you involved me in griefs which have been very near fatal to me? Oh pardon the transgression of my seeming neglect, best of parents, and of women, answered he; but as it is to this gentleman you are indebted for my life, be pleased to hear from his mouth my vindication. These words making her turn her eyes on the company, she immediately knew the person he mentioned to be Signior Clotario, one who had been the most passionate of her adorers, when in a virgin state; but being rejected by her for the father of Adario, his despair had made him



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him several times attempt the life of that more happy rival, for which there had ever since remained an extreme hatred between the families ; but to be told that he had been instrumental in preserving Adario, chased from her breast all sentiments but those of gratitude : she received him with all civility ; and being told by him, that the young lady who came with him was his daughter, made her all the compliments her beauty and fine air demanded from as many as saw her. After which, being impatient to know by what means they had become acquainted with her son, she pressed for the gratification of that desire ; and Clotario, pleased to oblige, began in this manner.



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*The History of FELICIA and ADARIO.*

**T**HIS young girl, said he, pointing to Felicia, is the only child I ever had by a lady who, after Miramillia, seemed most worthy of my affections; but the present she made me of her, proved fatal to herself: she died in childbed; and though I was extremely afflicted for her loss, I thought it would better become the love I bore her, to transplant it to the dear pledge she left me, than to waste my whole thoughts on what was not to be recovered by all my cares. Few fathers regard their children with that tenderness I have ever done Felicia, and to do her justice none ever seemed more to deserve it. When grown to an age to be sensible of my indulgence and her own duty, she made it all her study to let me see the one was not thrown away, by her strict observance of the other: I shall pass over in silence the improvements she made in all the accomplishments I thought it proper she should be instructed in, lest you should imagine I consider her with too partial an opinion. Such as she is, however, the noblest Chevaliers in the country solicited my consent to obtain her in marriage; but she appeared so far from having any inclination to enter into that state, that she entreated me  
with

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with the utmost earnestness to permit her to remain as she was. I loved her too well to press her to any thing she disliked, and assured her I would never exert my authority in that point, unless I should see her agitated with a blind passion for one unworthy of her; she protested, she would never entertain the best emotions of that kind, without first knowing if I was willing she should indulge them; and I observed in her so much discretion in other things, that I made no scruple of believing her. I depended entirely on her conduct, and was free from those corroding cares which so much perplex the generality of fathers. But the greater my imagined security, the greater my disappointment when I had reason to believe myself deceived. One morning, surprised that she came not to pay her usual testimonies of obedience, I sent to her chamber to enquire her health, and was informed that she went early into the fields, accompanied by a young man called Ferronese, the son of a person who had formerly been a servant to me. I was not pleased to hear she was gone out so attended; not that I thought she could be inspired with any affection for a man so much beneath her, but that having heard a bad character of him, I suspected he might be employed as an emissary from some other, whom I was certain should not approve thus recommended. I was just sending to order she should return, when a poor man, who happened to be at work in the grounds, came  
running

running almost out of breath to inform me, he had seen Ferronese on horseback with Felicia before him, who shrieking and crying out for help, plainly testified she had no hand in her own rape. I demanded which way they went, and having been informed, made my servants immediately mount in their pursuit. They obeyed with diligence, and were so successful in their search, that in the forest of Adorno, behind your castle, they found my daughter rending the air with cries, and standing between two persons who seemed dead, or dying; one of them was the false Ferronese, and the other her valiant defender, the gallant Adario: but his name or person being utterly a stranger to her, she told them, that as it was to that brave unknown she was indebted for the preservation of her honour, she should think herself the most ungrateful of women, if she did not use her utmost endeavours to bring him out of a condition in which he fell but for her sake. She added, that there were signs of life in him, and therefore ordered some of the men to ride with all speed to the next town for a litter; while she endeavoured as well as she could to bind his wounds. Her commands being obeyed, he was brought in that manner to my house, where the truth being related to me, I commended her behaviour, and was no less zealous than she had been to save the life of a person to whom I was obliged for the restoration and protection of my child. The surgeons no sooner looked

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on his wounds, than they informed me none of them were mortal, and that his only danger consisted in loss of blood, and having lain so long. They gave me hopes, however, of his life, and nothing was omitted which might prevent the disappointment of those hopes. In a few hours he opened his eyes, and soon after had the use of speech, but we forbore asking him any questions, being told, that nothing would be so prejudicial to him as noise or light. We exactly observed the orders given us by those to whom we committed the care of him; but I could not avoid taking notice that Felicia enquired of his health, with a concern which seemed to have in it something more than gratitude. When she related how bravely he had fought in her relief, and with what courage and gallantry he flew in the defence of her chastity, on the villain who attempted it, her eyes sparkled with fire I had never seen in them before. She seemed agitated with an unusual warmth. She took pleasure in repeating the tale whenever she had an opportunity. She was transported at the hopes given her of his recovery: she could not conceal her disorders whenever any suspicious words were let fall, that it was dubious: in fine, her every look and action expressed a tenderness which made me tremble. Pardon me, excellent Miramillia, I knew him not for Adoria, and though, even in that dismal state, I perceived enough about him, to believe him not unworthy of her, yet  
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the uncertainty whether he might look on her with the same eyes, or indeed might be in a condition to return her affection, made me fear she should place it on him: I concealed my sentiments, however, till I should be more assured, judging with reason, that if my conjectures were true, she would be more wary in her behaviour before me. The great skill and care that was employed, in a week's time relieved us from the fears of the death of our guest, and the young Felicia could not conceal a joy at the news, which heightened my suspicions. It was more than a month, however, before we were permitted to speak to him, and then no more than to testify our zeal for his recovery, so extremely weak was his condition. We were told by the persons employed to watch with him, that the chief use he made of his recovered speech, was, first, to enquire in whose house he was, and being told it belonged to the person in whose daughter's cause he had received those wounds, he expressed the utmost satisfaction; but that on hearing my name, it visibly abated, and he seemed rather troubled, than the contrary, to receive any obligations from Clotario. He could not, however, refrain asking many questions concerning Felicia, such as what solicitations she had for marriage, who were the pretenders to her, which of them she seemed most to favour, or to whom I was inclined to dispose of her, by what means she came to be exposed to the danger from which he had delivered her: all

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which being answered according to the direct truth, they said he expressed an infinity of pleasure to hear she was not yet engaged either by duty or inclination. I could not be told these things, without believing the same sentiments had inspired them both; and having myself, as you very well know, madam, experienced the force of love, sincerely wished he might be of such a quality as might not render theirs unfortunate, which I very much feared, because of the regret with which he heard of hers. Admittance at last being allowed, I went to visit him, taking Felicia with me; decency and gratitude I thought obliging her to pay this respect to one to whom she was indebted for all that was most dear to her: I imagined also, that by being present at this interview, I should be able to assure myself of the sentiments of them both, more fully perhaps than any other way; and indeed there required but little penetration to read in their countenances what passed in their hearts. Their affection for each other was as apparent as the care they took to conceal it; nor can I say, that I was much troubled at it, there was something in the face and voice of Adario that insensibly attached me to him. I did not indeed, Miramillia, think of you at that time, much less imagine that this noble youth was your son; yet it is certain that great resemblance he has to a form which had been once so dear to me, it was that filled me with impressions so much in his favour. The first civilities

civilities being over, I desired him to let me know to whom I had been so much obliged; but never did I see so sudden and so strange an alteration as appeared in him at this demand. That extreme paleness, which the weakness of his condition had spread over his face, now gave way to a flushing red; it seemed as if his whole little remains of blood had forsok all other parts to paint his blushing cheeks. His lips trembled as he was about to make reply, nor could he presently bring forth a word; but when he did, it was in this manner, how easy were it for me, said he, to impose on your belief, by giving myself a name to which I have no pretence? but know, my lord, that whatever I am, I was bred to hate deceit; and as there is an unsurmountable reason for my concealing from what family I am descended, think it a less misfortune to run the hazard of passing in your esteem, as a person who has done something, for which he is afraid or ashamed to own himself for what he is, than to be conscious of a crime like falsehood. This only (continued he) I entreat you to believe of me, that I am wholly devoted to your service, and am so far from regretting, that in it I have spent part of my blood, that I would gladly shed the remainder on the same account, and bless heaven for nothing more earnestly, than that I have been the happy instrument of restoring the admirable Felicia to your embraces. Here he ceased to speak,



and the astonishment his words involved me in, left me not the power of making him an immediate answer; I was confounded, I knew not what to think, I could not believe he was of a birth inferior to what his pride would make him wish to be thought; there was something so noble in his air and countenance, as presently checked all suggestions of that kind. Nor could I imagine he had been guilty of any thing which should oblige him to conceal himself: that gallant freedom with which he spoke, and that love of truth which he preferred to all things, made me conceive the highest opinion of his honour, and his justice: in fine, what he said was both pleasing and disturbing to me; I admired him more than I had done, but was more fearful than I had been, lest Felicia should do so too. When the tumults of my thoughts would give me leave, I told him, that the obligations I was under to him, forbade I should press to know any thing he was unwilling to reveal; nor as I had done nothing to deserve his confidence, could not take it ill that he refused it me. However, pursued I, before we part you may perhaps have a better opinion of my discretion and my gratitude; and as a proof that you are desirous to make trial of both, I beg you will command every thing in this house with the same freedom as you would your own. He made no other reply to these words than bowing his head, for he had not yet recovered strength enough to move his body in the least;

least; after this we began to talk of the villany of Ferronese, and the little security a young woman can have out of the presence of those whom duty and nature obliges to be tender of her honour. Felicia excused her going into the field with him, by saying he told her, there was that moment a great mountain raised at the end of it in that night, which he imagined had been done by an earthquake; she added, that not having the least suspicion that he had any design on her, nor could apprehend a danger of any kind so near the house, she had run out to see this wonder, at the garden-gate which led to the field, and happened to be then open; but that she was no sooner out of hearing, than she perceived a horse tied by the bridle to a tree, on which he mounted, taking her by force in his arms, and making no stop till he came to that wood, where Adario found him ready to sacrifice her honour to a passion she would not consent to gratify by marriage with him. I observed, while Felicia was relating to Adario the means by which she was carried away, she took a more than ordinary pains in excusing her inadvertency; and this served to convince me more, that she was in reality as sensible of the tender passion as 'tis possible for a young heart to be. We continued in the chamber till a certain faintness, which his countenance in spite of him betrayed, reminded me that we had put him on the necessity of speaking more than his strength would bear; and indeed the

surgeon found him so disordered at his next visit, that he desired we would forbear any further conversation with him for a good while. It was near another month before we were suffered to go into his chamber, any farther than the door, to enquire after his health, which I constantly did every day. But I took notice, that after this, Felicia grew extremely melancholy, and at last so pale, and her whole air so dejected, that she was scarcely to be known: I guessed, that this change in her proceeded from the endeavours she made to conquer the passion she had entertained for a person who was resolved to continue a stranger to her; and to forward her cure, sent her to the house of a sister of mine, who had many children of much the same age with herself, in whose society I hoped her melancholy might abate: I perceived an unwillingness in her to go, but not so much as offered any thing in opposition to it. But she had not been there many days before my sister sent her back, fearing some sad effect of her distemper, which, from the moment she left home, had encreased by such swift degrees, that at her return she seemed but like the spectre of the once gay Felicia. Adario too, on hearing she was gone, fell into convulsions, which were near being fatal to him; this new disorder, however, retarded his recovery so much, that it was near four months before he was able to walk about his chamber. I was so greatly affected with their mutual distress, that I resolved

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to relieve it, if by any means I could: but neither of them having declared their sentiments to me, I was at a loss how to break the knowledge I had of them, either to the one or the other. My concern for my child, whom I saw almost at the point of death, made me at last cast aside all scruples. I revealed to her the discovery I had made, and perceiving she was in a confusion scarce supportable, I endeavoured to comfort her, and told her it was no breach of modesty for a young maid to be charmed with merit such as our guest appeared to be master of. I assured her also that I saw the same passion working as powerfully in his soul as in hers, and that if there was no greater impediment than I could yet foresee, marriage should, in a small time, complete their mutual wishes. The answers she made were but short, and consisted only in thanks for the tenderness I expressed for her repose, yet could I plainly discern the greatest indulgence on any other score would have availed but little to the recovery of her peace.

From her I went to the chamber of Adario, whom I found extremely pensive; I would not, as yet, take any notice to him of my design, being desirous of seeing if he would reveal to Felicia more than he was willing to do to me: — To accomplish which intent, I ordered dinner to be served in his chamber, seeing he was now in a condition to endure company. This was done every day; and sometimes pretending sudden business, I would retire, on



purpose to give him the liberty of explaining himself, if he had courage to do so. — I questioned my daughter concerning his behaviour, and she with blushes, at last, confessed, that he had declared himself her lover; that having told him she could not, without breach of modesty, accept of any proposals of that kind from a person, who, while he made an offer of his heart, concealed his name; he assured her, that his quality was not inferior to hers — but that, when she pressed him to make it known, he only sighed, and turned his head away. I need not repeat the trouble I was in at this latter part of the account. You may believe, on the one side, I was infinitely concerned at the despair of a child so dear to me; and, on the other, could not think of giving her to a man, from whom nothing could draw the secret of his birth. After a long consideration, I commanded Felicia to inform him, she would listen no farther to the declarations he ceased not to make her, nor on any terms believe his pretensions were such as were consistent with honour, unless he made them known to me, and also from what parents he derived his being: she obeyed, and he appeared in all the confusion imaginable; he told her, that he had not the least hope of succeeding; that all the reason he had so long concealed himself was, that he was certain of losing all that good-will the service he had done me had acquired, when once that fatal secret should be discovered: — There is, said he, an enmity between

between our parents, which, on the side of yours, I fear will never cease. But why should I delay your attention? He at length was prevailed on to discover himself your son; which I was no sooner made acquainted with, than I felt a transport which no tongue is able to express.—The merits of Adario seemed now to shine with double lustre, when I knew they were derived from Miramillia. Miramillia! whom I have never ceased to admire, even when my rash despair made me attempt the life of the man most dear to her:—I flew immediately to Adario, I embraced him with all the demonstration of a paternal affection:—assured him, I should think myself blessed in making him my son.——There remains, said I, but one impediment to our common satisfaction, the consent of your excellent mother, her forgiveness of a crime, which I have since severely repented of, and vouchsafing to join your hands. Adario returned my endearments as became his affection to my daughter, and gave me hopes you would not be less bounteous to his wishes than I had been.

Thus, madam, continued he, have you heard the history of a passion, which, as violent as it is, has not transported the persons influenced by it to act any thing contrary to duty, or to honour; all the tenderness Felicia has been so fortunate to inspire in the soul of Adario, has never made him once intreat the gratification of his desires, till authorized by your permission. If then the mutual love of these darlings

lings of the hearts of us both, can be of any power to move you, or the sincere penitence of Clotario mitigate the guilt of his former rashness, behold I join in their submissions, and intreat you will not be refractory to their wishes.

Here ceased Clotario to speak, and taking Adario in one hand, and Felicia in the other, they all three fell on their knees before Miramillia, who expressing some confusion to see Clotario in that posture, first raised him in the most obliging manner, then embraced Felicia and Adario with a tenderness, which denoted she would be far from opposing their desires, which she soon after ratified by her words.

Thus was this house of mourning now converted to a proportionable joy: not only Felicia, but Clotario, she obliged to have apartments with her, till preparations were made for the marriage, which was soon after completed to the unspeakable satisfaction of all who were concerned in it.

FINIS.



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